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CENSURA LITERARIA.

VOLUME VIII.

Singula lætus
Exquiritque auditque virûm monumenta priorum.
VIRGIL.

BARNARD AND FARLEY,
Skinner Street, London.

CENSURA LITERARIA.

CONTAINING

TITLES, ABSTRACTS,

AND

OPINIONS

OF

OLD ENGLISH BOOKS,

WITH

ORIGINAL DISQUISITIONS, ARTICLES OF BIOGRAPHY, AND OTHER LITERARY ANTIQUITIES.

BY

SIR EGERTON BRYDGES, BART. K. J. M. P.

SECOND EDITION.

WITH THE ARTICLES CLASSED IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER UNDER THEIR SEPARATE HEADS.

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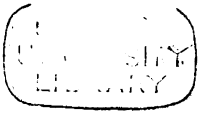

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CENSURA LITERARIA.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES.

Art. DCLXXI. REV. JAMES HURDIS.

James Hurdis was born about 1763; he was a native of Sussex, and educated at Magdalen College, Oxford, where he took the degree of A.M. 1787; and obtained a fellowship. In 1788 he published a poem in blank verse entitled *The Village Curate*; and in 1790 *Adriano, or the First of June.* These poems immediately brought him into notice; and I heard them spoken of in terms of the warmest praise by an eminent Oxford scholar at the time of their first appearance; while others equally condemned them. They are too much an echo of Cowper; but still they possess considerable merit; and by no means deserve the contemptuous terms, in which Miss Seward has spoken of them in her Memoirs of Darwin. In 1790 he published *A short Critical Disquisition on the true meaning of a passage in Genesis*, i. 21. In 1793, when he was curate of Burwash in Sussex, he addressed to the inhabitants of that parish *Reflections on the Commencement of the New Year.* In that year he had the honour of being elected Professor of Poetry at Oxford, against the competition of Mr. Kett. I have heard Oxford men say, with what truth I know not, that his scholarship was

not equal to the situation. Perhaps the soreness of the contest had not then subsided. In point of natural endowments he was far superior to some, who have filled that office. He published also *A volume of Poems*, 1791, including the play of Sir Thomas More,—*Cursory Remarks upon the Arrangement of Shakspeare's Plays, occasioned by reading Mr. Malone's Essay on the Chronological order of those celebrated pieces*, 1792; *and Select Critical Remarks upon the English Version of the ten first chapters of Genesis*, 1794. He likewise gave a new edition of *Drayton's Heroical Epistles*. He was a correspondent of Cowper, several of whose letters to him are in Hayley's Life of that poet. He died at Blackbourn, Co. Lancaster, Dec. 22, 1801, aged 38; leaving a character of uncommon gentleness and purity of mind and conduct.

Art. DCLXXII. REV. HENRY MOORE.

This ingenious man was, I believe, a dissenting minister in the west of England, where he wasted a long life in obscurity. He was a flower

> ——————— born to blush unseen
> And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

After his death some fruits of his genius however were given to the public, by Dr. Aikin, under the title of *Poems Lyrical and Miscellaneous of the late Rev. Henry Moore*. Dr. Aikin says, "They will not, perhaps, rank among the more original poems of the language; but I am mistaken if they will not maintain a permanent place among the most splendid, the most melodious, the most elevated in

sentiment and diction. The versification of the Odes is perhaps too void of regularity, but it abounds in strains exquisitely musical, and often happily adapted to the subject. The imagery is singularly grand, elegant, and rich; and both the sublime and the pathetic are touched with a master hand. Above all, these pieces are characterized by that expansive glow of benevolence, that ardour of pure and rational devotion, which, when allied to genuine poetry, exert the noblest influence on the soul." * He died Feb. 2, 1802, æt. 71.

Art. DCLXXIII. THOMAS DERMODY.

A young man, whose vicious excesses, and total want of principle and conduct in every action of life, consigned him to a premature grave in Oct. 1802, after his genius blazing through obscurity of birth in Ireland, and almost incredible distresses, created by his own infatuated misbehaviour, had led him into the paths of distinction and patronage. He published a volume of poems in the year in which he died. It exhibits many proofs of wonderful powers, when the circumstances of low dissipation, and debauchery, under which it was written, are considered. It shews the strangest and most unaccountable inconsistency between a mind, which could feel all the delicacies of sentiment, and all the niceties of language; and a conduct which was hardened to the lowest state of vice.

The following Sonnet to Lord Moira breathes a moral pathos, which we should only expect from a virtuous heart.

* Aikin's Letters on English Poetry, p. 295.

To Francis Earl of Moira

" How many with'ring years of dull despair
Have o'er my fated front relentless roll'd,
Since first beneath a Moira's partial care
My happier moments wav'd their wings of gold!
Ah me! And must I never more behold
The glorious orb of day in gladness rise?
No more salute with rapture-beaming eyes,
The glimm'ring star that shuts the shepherd's fold?
No more! If led not by thy lenient hand
To the lone hermitage of learned ease;
Where pensive joy may tenderly expand
His blooms, sore shatter'd by the blighting breeze;
And a new mental Eden by degrees
Bud forth, best patron, at thy soft command!"

It must be admitted, however, that the poems, in consequence of the attention excited by the extraordinary history of the author, have had more than their due share of praise. Mr. Raymond has written the life of this profligate but brilliant youth.

Art. DCLXXIV. REV. RICHARD HOLE.

This poet was a native of Exeter; and educated at Exeter College, Oxford, where he took the degree of LL.B. in 1771. In early life he published a versification of Fingal in flowing and elegant rhyme. In 1781 he gave the world a translation of *Homer's Hymn to Ceres*, in 8vo. In 1789 came out, *Arthur, or the Northern Enchantment, a Poetical Romance, in Seven Books. By Richard Hole LL.B. London printed for Robinsons*, 8vo. Upon this work his poetical fame must rest. He communi-

cated several pieces to Polwhele's Devonshire and Cornwall Poems; and several also to the volumes of Essays published by the Literary Society of Exeter. In 1797 he published separately *Remarks on the Arabian Nights Entertainments, in which the origin of Sinbad's Voyages, and other Oriental fictions is particularly considered.* In 1762 *he was* presented by the Bishop of Exeter to the rectory of Faringdon in Devonshire; and held with it by dispensation the vicarage of Buckerell, which he exchanged for the rectory of Inwardleigh. He died at Exmouth in the flower of his age after a painful illness, May 28, 1803. To his numerous friends his premature death caused the deepest regret; as they lost in him one not only of brilliant talents, and elegant and extensive learning; but of the most amiable character and greatest integrity. I will not attempt to characterize his *Arthur;* for it is long since I have read it with attention. I suspect that the tameness of the couplet is not quite consistent with the wildness of the subject; and the sort of charms with which the author wished to endue it. Romantic imagery and the combinations of enchantment seem better suited to his inclinations than his genius. But let it be remembered that this is a hasty opinion. Hole seems at least to have applied to the true fountains for inspiration.

ART. DCLXXV. RICHARD OWEN CAMBRIDGE.

ONE of the wits of a former reign, who died at his seat at Twickenham, Sept. 17, 1802, æt. 86. He

is best known by his *Scribleriad, a mock heroic poem in six books, 4to.* 1751. It is a poetical continuation of the Memoirs of Martinus Scriblerus, which ridicule the errors and follies of false taste and false learning. He also wrote *An Account of the War in India, between the English and French on the Coast of Coromandel from the year* 1750 *to* 1760, *&c. 4to.* 1761, and was the author of several papers in THE WORLD. His son has since republished his works with a Memoir. He was a very ingenious, learned and amiable man; but can hardly be admitted into the rank of poets.

ART. DCLXXVI. ROBERT JEPHSON, ESQ.

THIS author is best known as a dramatic writer. His *Braganza*, 1775; *Law of Lombardy*, 1779; and *Count of Narbonne*, 1781, were all received on the English stage; besides which he wrote a farce; an opera; and *Julia*, a tragedy, 1787. He was originally an officer in the Irish army, and being patronized by the late Lord Townshend, when Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, for his wit and convivial talents, was made Master of the Horse, (a place which he held for many years) and brought into the Irish Parliament. In 1794 he published *Roman Portraits, a Poem, in heroic verse, with historical remarks and illustrations, in one vol. 4to.* and the same year *The Confessions of James Baptiste Couteau, Citizen of France, written by himself, and translated from the original French, in 3 vols. 12mo.* a severe satire of his own on the depravity of French manners. He died at his house, Black Rock, near

Dublin, May 31, 1803. His *Roman Portraits* appeared to me when published dull and prosaic; and almost every where deficient in the spirit of true poetry.

Art. DCLXXVII. JOHN HOOLE.

This ingenious, and very laborious author scarce aspired to the merit of original composition. He was a very useful and elegant translator from the Italian in a style which, though it bore no similitude to the spirit of the originals, yet produced popular and amusing works for modern readers of no extraordinary erudition or energy. He was the son of Samuel Hoole, a London watchmaker, and was born about 1727: and was designed for his father's trade, but was too short-sighted for the business. He was therefore placed a clerk in the accountant's office of the East India Company; from whence in due time he was removed to the office of Auditor of Indian accounts, in which office he remained till he retired upon an annuity not long before his death. From an early period he employed his leisure hours in the cultivation of literature; and in 1763 brought forth his translation of *Tasso's Jerusalem Delivered, 2 vols. 8vo.* In 1767 he published *The Works of Metastatio, translated from the Italian, 2 vols. 12mo.* —and in 1773 the first volume of a translation of Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, which he published complete ten years afterwards, in five vols 8vo. He also published in 1791 the Orlando of Ariosto reduced to 24 books, the narrative connected, and the stories disposed in a regular series, 2 vols. 8vo.—

and in 1792 a translation of Tasso's RINALDO in 1 vol. 8vo. He also wrote three tragedies, *Cyrus*, 1768; *Timanthes*, 1770; and *Cleonice*, 1775.* He also edited the *Critical Essays on the English Poets* of his friend John Scott of Amwell, to which he prefixed an account of the life and writings of the author, 1785, 8vo. He retired in his latter days to Tenterden in Kent; but died at Dorking in Surry, Aug 2, 1803, æt. 76.

ART. DCLXXVIII. REV. RICHARD GRAVES.

THIS amiable, well read, and lively old man, who died at the age of 90, at the close of 1804, was known to all the frequenters of Bath, near which he resided at his rectory of Claverton, for more than half a century. He was the friend and correspondent of Shenstone; and author of a variety of spirited and amusing publications; of which his novel, entitled *The Spiritual Quixote*, bids fairest for permanent fame. He was born at Mickleton in Gloucestershire, May 4, 1715, being second son of Richard Graves, Esq. of that place. At the age of sixteen he went to Pembroke College, Oxford, where his acquaintance with Shenstone commenced. In 1736 he was elected fellow of All-Souls' College; and in 1740 took orders. In 1750 he was presented to the rectory of Claverton, to which was added the living of Kilmersdon. His first publication was

* His son, the Rev. Samuel Hoole, married a daughter of Arthur Young, the Secretary to the Board of Agriculture. He is author of *Edward or the Curate*, a poem, 1787; and *Aurelia, or the Contest*, a poem, 1783.

The Festoon, or a Collection of Epigrams, with an Essay on that species of composition; and afterwards published *Two Volumes of Poems* under the title of *Euphrosyne*, 1780. His *Spiritual Quixote* came out in 1772. His last publication was *The Invalid, with the obvious means of enjoying Life by a Nonagenarian.* In 1788 he published *Recollections* of some particulars in the Life of *Shenstone.** His poems were rather bagatelles, than serious effusions of the Muse. It was amusing to see him on the verge of ninety, walking to Bath with the briskness of youth.

Art. DCLXXIX. WILLIAM CUNNINGHAM.

A SELF-TAUGHT poet, died at Maglerabeg, near Dromore in Ireland, Dec. 27, 1804, æt. 24. He had been nothing more than a weaver-boy, who receiving instruction at one of the Bishop of Dromore's Sunday-schools, made such a progress as to be able to request a loan of books in a copy of such verses, as instantly engaged the bishop's attention and patronage. He was then placed at the Diocesan school of Dromore, where he made a rapid progress in Latin and Greek; and qualified himself to become an assistant teacher in the academy of the Rev. Dr. Bruce of Belfast. A rapid consumption, however, soon came on, and baffled the powers of medicine, terminating in early youth a career that promised

* For a further list of his publications, see Gent. Mag. Vol. lxxiv, p. 1166.

much reputation. A few of his poetical compositions are to be found in the Gentleman's Magazine.

Art. DCLXXX. REV. JOSEPH DACRE CARLYLE, B. D.

This very industrious and learned man was a native of Cumberland. He was educated at Queen's College, Cambridge, where he was much respected for his assiduity, regularity, and quiet manners; but I do not remember that he was considered to possess any extraordinary powers. He took a good degree, and was attentive to the studies in vogue; but he did not then display any poetical turn; or even any considerable classical attainments. He took the degree of A. B. 1779; M. A. 1783; B. D. 1793; and was about 1780 elected Fellow of his College; from whence he retired into the country, where he probably first applied himself to Oriental literature. He published I. *Mauret Allatafet Jemaleddini filii Togri Bardii, seu rerum Egypticarum Annales ab A. C.* 971, *usque ad A.* 1453. *E codice MSo. Bibliothecæ Academicæ Cantabrigiæ*, 1792, *with a Latin version and notes.* II. *History of Egypt from an inedited Arabic MS.* and accompanied by a critical and elegant commentary. III. *Specimens of Arabic poetry*, with an English poetical version, and notes. In 1785 he was chosen Arabic Professor at Cambridge on the resignation of Dr. Craven. He afterwards, in 1799, accompanied the embassy of Lord Elgin to Constantinople, for the purpose of obtaining access to the library of the

Seraglio. On his return he retired to his vicarage of Newcastle upon Tyne, where he immediately fell into a dangerous state of health, which did not prevent his attempt to prepare the fruits of his labours and travels for the public. He had undertaken a correct edition of the Arabic Bible; and was composing his Dissertation on the Troad, with observations made during his tour through Lesser Asia, Syria, and Egypt, when death put an end to his designs on April 12, 1804, at the age of forty-five. His Tour has since appeared. His *Specimens of Arabic poetry*, 1796, seem to have received at least their due share of praise. They appear to me deficient in a true poetical spirit. The truth I suspect to be, that Carlyle was a man of more industry than genius. His acquirements were no doubt, very great, and very meritorious; and I believe him to have been a man of a virtuous and excellent disposition. Before he died, he had been appointed Chancellor of Carlisle.

Art. DCLXXXI. CHRISTOPHER ANSTEY, ESQ.

Christopher Anstey was a man of wit and a scholar; and may be called the inventor of a particular species of colloquial verse, which has been very popular; but like every thing of a popular cast has for a time probably been valued too highly. He was born about 1725; and educated at Westminster-school; as I have heard from some of his schoolfellows; but perhaps changed to Eton, as he was afterwards of King's College, Cambridge, where he

was refused his degrees on account of some innocent irregularity, of which I have heard the particulars, though they have now escaped my memory.* He had a moderate patrimony at Trumpington, near Cambridge, where he resided part of his life. In 1766 came forth his *New Bath Guide, or Memoirs of the Blunderhead family*. It had a great circulation, as many well remember, and as is noticed in Gray's Letters. The next year he printed a poem *on the death of the Marquis of Tavistock*. His *Election Ball* appeared about 1774; and in 1776 his *Latin Epistle to C. W. Bampfylde* on his designs for the *Election Ball*. In 1774 he also published *The Priest Dissected*. In 1779 came out his *Poetical Paraphrase of the Thirteenth Chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians*; and in 1780, *Speculation, or a Defence of Mankind*. He afterwards published one or two other trifles. The latter part of his life was spent at Bath, where his caustic humour constantly found food. He died at Harnage House, Wilts, the seat of his son-in-law, Henry Bosanquet, Esq. Aug. 3, 1805, æt. 81.

Art. DCLXXXII. REV. JOHN CLARKE HUBBARD.

This poet was little known in his life. He was of Merton College, Oxford, where he took the degree of A. M. in 1769. In the latter part of his life he published a poem entitled *Jacobinism*, which appears to possess considerable merit. This drew

* I think the cause assigned in Gent. Mag. 75, p. 780, is inaccurate.

him into notice, and he obtained from the crown the rectory of St. John's, Horsleydown, in Surrey, worth about 200l. a year. He was also the author of *The Triumph of Poetry*, and other poems. He died about the middle of the year 1805.

Art. DCLXXXIII. BRYAN EDWARDS.

This gentleman was a native of Wiltshire, but went early in life to the West Indies, where he succeeded by inheritance to a considerable fortune. He afterwards returned to England, and became a West India merchant, and set up also a bank at Southampton. His *History of the West Indies*, in 2 vols. 4to. 1793, to which he added in 1797 the history of the French colony of St. Domingo, is a work of credit. He possessed much poetical fancy, and introduced some poems in his History; but he also printed and privately distributed among his friends a separate *Volume of Poems*, about the year 1794. He married a Miss Phipps of Wiltshire, by whom he left a son; and died at his house at the Polygon, Southampton, July 16, 1800, being then M. P. for Grampound.

Art. DCLXXXIV. LADY BURRELL.

Widow of Sir William Burrell, Bart. published *Poems* in 2 vols. 8vo. 1793; and in 1794 *The Thimbriad* from Xenophon's Cyropædia; and *Telemachus*, extracted from Fenelon's Story. She died June 20, 1802.

* See Gent. Mag. Vol. LXXVIII. p. 794.

Art. DCLXXXV. MRS. ROBINSON.

This celebrated woman once known in the annals of gallantry by the name of *Perdita*, was afterwards distinguished in the circles of fashionable literature under the signature of Laura-Maria.* The zeal with which in the wane of her beauty she devoted herself to the Muses did her honour; but it may candidly be doubted whether she ever drank at the true waters of Helicon. Her style both in prose and verse† was the most unchaste that ever was exhibited; and she seemed to deal more in an exuberance of glittering words than in thoughts of any kind. She paid in her latter days by neglect and poverty for the vanity and vices of her youth. She died Dec. 26, 1800, at her cottage on Englefield Green, aged about forty. Some Memoirs of her written by herself have since been published. She was a native of Bristol; her maiden name was Darby.

Art. DCLXXXVI. REV. WILLIAM COLLIER.

Was many years Tutor of Trinity College, Cambridge, and Hebrew Professor there from 1771 to 1790, whence at length pecuniary embarrassments, arising, I believe from indolence and carelessness, removed him. He fell afterwards, as I have heard, into severe distresses, and was for some time in legal confinement. He then published a Collection

* She published a small 8vo. volume of Poems as early as 1775.

† See her two volumes of Poems, 1791 and 1792; and her most absurd novel entitled, *Vancenza*.

of his Poems, *with Translations from Authors in various Languages; 2 vols.* 12*mo.* 1800, in the hope of relieving his necessities; but was most severely and most unjustly treated by periodical critics, who, in his days of prosperity would have looked up to his talents and acquirements. I will not venture to pronounce upon his poems, because the volumes never fell into my hands; but I remember the character which his abilities had acquired him at Cambridge, and his fame as an elegant classical scholar; and an inscription which I once saw written in a pure and classical style, and which I think was turned into Greek by Professor Porson when an undergraduate, confirmed me in the justness of his reputation. He died Aug. 7, 1803, æt. 61, at Newington, Surrey, being then Senior Fellow of Trinity College, and Rector of Orwell, Co. Cambridge.

ART. DCLXXXVII. JOSEPH FAWCETT.

AN eccentric character, originally a dissenting minister, but afterwards a farmer, published in 1795 a poem, called *The Art of War*, 4to. and in 1803 *War Elegies*. He died at Hedgegrove, near Watford, Essex, Jan. 24, 1804.

ART. DCLXXXVIII. Rev. Mr. WILSON of Halton Gill.

"AMONG the singular characters of Craven," says Dr. Whitaker, "it will now give pain to no one, if I notice Mr. Wilson, formerly curate of Halton-Gill in Arncliffe, and father of the late Rev.

Edward Wilson, canon of Windsor. He wrote a tract entitled 'The Man in the Moon;' which was seriously meant to convey the knowledge of common astronomy in the following strange vehicle: A cobler, Israel Jobson by name, is supposed to ascend first to the top of Penigent; and thence, as a second stage, equally practicable, to the moon; after which he makes a tour of the whole solar system. From this excursion, however, the traveller brings back little information which might not have been had upon earth, excepting that the inhabitants of one of the planets, I forget which, were made of pot-metal. The work contains some other extravagances; but the writer, after all, was a man of talents, and has abundantly shewn, that, had he been blessed with a sound mind and a superior education, he would have been capable of much better things. If I had the book* before me, I could quote single sentences here and there, which, in point of composition, rise to no mean degree of excellence.

"Mr. Wilson had also good mechanical hands, and carved well in wood; a talent which he applied to several whimsical purposes. But his chef d'œuvre was an oracular head like that of Friar Bacon and the disciple of the famous Escotillo,† with which he diverted himself, and amazed his neighbours, till a certain Reverend wiseacre seriously threatened to

* "It is rarely to be met with, having, as I am told, been industriously bought up by his family. I have only seen one copy, and my recollection of what I read is not very particular."

† "See Don Quixote, b. iv. c. 10."

complain of the poor man to his metropolitan as an enchanter. After this the oracle was mute."*

Art. DCLXXXIX. DR. JOHN WALKER.

From Lord Woodhouselee's Memoirs of Lord Kames.

"Dr. John Walker, minister of Moffat, afterwards Professor of Natural History in the University of Edinburgh, 'was a man most eminently qualified' for the office of surveying the Western Islands of Scotland, to which he was appointed through the interest of Lord Kames, 'as joining to every endowment of scientific knowledge requisite for the undertaking, an ardent mind and a great portion of natural sagacity and penetration.'

"It was his custom for a great part of his life to indulge himself in nocturnal study; seldom feeling the resolution to quit his books and papers till four or five o'clock in the morning; and of course passing the better part of the day in bed: a practice which destroyed a good constitution, and in the end was attended with a total loss of eye-sight, for the last six or seven years of his life. Yet though thus deprived of the principal source of his enjoyment, and deeply suffering from domestic misfortune, the blessings of a well-regulated mind, an equal temper, a happy flow of original spirits, and a memory rich in knowledge, and stored with amusing anecdotes, not only rendered his conversation delightful to his friends, but supplied the means and power of still

* Whitaker's History of Craven, p. 433.

occupying his time with his favourite literary and scientific pursuits."*

Art. DCXC. DR. DAVID DOIG.

From the same.

"Dr. David Doig was the son of a small farmer in the county of Angus. His father died when he was an infant, and it was his good fortune that his mother entered into a second marriage with a worthy man, who, though in very moderate circumstances, and soon burdened with a young family of his own, discharged to him the duty of an affectionate parent. From a constitutional defect of eye sight, he was twelve years of age before he had learned to read: but as his intellects were uncommonly quick, he had no sooner overcome that difficulty, than he made so rapid a progress, that after three years instruction of a parish schoolmaster, in Latin, writing, and arithmetic, he presented himself a candidate for a Bursary, or endowment for poor scholars in the University of St. Andrew's, and obtained it on a comparative trial of his abilities with the competitors. Having finished with great approbation the usual course of philosophy and classical learning, he took the degree of A. B. and entered on the study of divinity. Certain conscientious scruples, however, concerning some articles of the Westminster Confession of Faith, which is framed according to the principles of the most rigid

* Life of Lord Kames II. 12—105.

Calvinism, prevented the prosecution of his views of entering into the church. He taught for several years the parish schools of Monifeith in Angus, and Kennoway and Falkland in Fife; when on a vacancy of the mastership of the grammar school of Stirling, his reputation as a teacher procured him an appointment from the magistrates of the town to that office; which he discharged for forty years with the greatest ability, and with the respect and esteem of all who knew him. It is a fact somewhat remarkable, that he received on the same day a diploma of A. M. from his *Alma Mater* of St. Andrew's, and an honorary degree of LL.D. from the University of Glasgow. In addition to the most profound knowledge of the Greek and Latin languages, which he wrote with a classical purity, Dr. Doig had successfully studied the Hebrew, Arabic, and other kindred dialects, and was deeply versed in oriental literature. He has given an abundant proof of his proficiency in those studies, in the dissertations on the subjects of the *Mythology*, *Mysteries*, and *Philology*, which were composed by him for the *Encyclopædia*, at the request of his intimate friend and the companion of his social hours, the Rev. Dr. George Gleig, the able and ingenious editor of the latter volumes of that great work, and the author of many of its most valuable articles. That part of the work which contains the articles on Philology, was published in London in the same week with a *Dissertation on the Greek Verb*, by Dr. Vincent, now Dean of Westminster, who was so struck with the coincidence of Dr. Doig's opinions on many points with his own, that he began an epistolary correspondence with the

author and these two eminent scholars went hand in hand in their researches, and in a free communication of their opinions, with a liberality of sentiment which did honour to both. Such likewise was the conduct of the learned Mr. Bryant, who had entered into a correspondence with Dr. Doig on the subject of Ancient Mythology.* Dr. Doig died in March 1800 at the age of eighty-one. Besides his great erudition, the elegance of his taste was shewn in his favourite amusements, the composition of many small poetical pieces, both in English and Latin. Those of an epigrammatic turn are peculiarly excellent. The following elegiac stanzas, written by him, on the subject of his own life and studies, and which were engraven on a marble monument, erected to his memory at the expense of the community of Stirling, would have done honour to the pen of a Markham, a Vincent Bourne, or even a Buchanan.

Edidici quædam, perlegi plura, notavi
Paucula, cum domino mox peritura suo.
Lubrica Pieriæ tentarem præmia palmæ,
Credulus, ingenio heu nimis alta meo.
Extincto famam ruituro crescere saxo
Posse putem, vivo quæ mihi nulla fuit."†

Art. DCXCI. LORD GARDENSTONE.

From the same.

"The Honourable Francis Garden, Gar-

* "Among the proofs of the profound learning of Dr. Doig, is a 'Dissertation on the Ancient Hellene,' printed in the Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, Vol. III."

† Life of Lord Kames, II. 141.

denstone, was a Judge of the Court of Session and Justiciary. He was an acute and able lawyer; of great natural eloquence; and with much wit and humour, had a considerable acquaintance with classical and elegant literature. He was appointed King's Solicitor in 1761, and raised to the bench in 1764. On the death of his elder brother, Alexander Gardon, of Troup, M. P. he succeeded in 1785 to a very ample fortune. His tenants and dependents found him an indulgent and liberal master; and the village of Lawrence-Kirk in Kincardineshire, raised by him from a few mean cottages to a large populous and thriving baronial borough, distinguished by its industry in various branches of manufacture, is an honourable monument of his public spirit and active benevolence. Let these his merits be remembered, while his failings are humanely consigned to oblivion."*

Art. DCXCII. JOSEPH RICHARDSON, ESQ.

A native of Northumberland, became a member of St. John's College, Cambridge, 1774, where he distinguished himself by his poetical talents. Thence he removed to the Middle Temple, 1779, and was called to the bar, 1784. But he had previously been drawn into the vortex of party politics; became a writer in the newspapers, and was concerned with Dr. Lawrence in the *Rolliad*, and *Probationary Odes*, to which Sheridan, Fitzpatrick, Fox, and other wits of the party, are said to have contributed. He afterwards wrote *The Fugitive*, a comedy, which

* Life of Lord Kames II. 99.

was praised and supported with all the zeal of party, but it did not answer the expectations which had been raised of it. Party obtained him the patronage of the Duke of Northumberland, who brought him into parliament for Newport in Cornwall; and assisted him in purchasing a share of Drury-Lane Theatre; of which, in conjunction with his friend Sheridan, he had for some time the management. I knew him a little in London; for he had left Cambridge before I came to it; he seemed an easy, good humoured man, without much vigour; but his talents were wasted in the degrading service of a party. He died June 9, 1803, at the age of forty-six. His poetry was of the familiar, or satiric kind.

ART. DCXCIII. *Brief Biographical Notice of* DR. DEERING, *author of the History of Nottingham.*

DR. DEERING, or Doering, took the degree of M. D. at Leyden. He came to London, and was appointed Secretary to the English Embassy to Russia, from whence he returned to this country, married, and settled as a physician at Nottingham. But his capricious and unfortunate temper prevented his success here in his profession, and he was soon reduced to poverty. In these difficulties, John Plumptre, Esq. who had an ancient seat in this town, and who, as well as some of his ancestors, represented it in Parliament, undertook to patronize and assist in the *History and Antiquities* of that place. This work appeared in 4to. in 1751; but as it was a

labour of time, the author died of poverty and a broken heart before it was published. His friends, by way of support, procured for him a commission in the Nottingham Foot, raised in the Rebellion of 1745; but the benefits did not equal the expense. Though he was master of nine languages, he would observe that every little schoolmaster could maintain himself, which was more than he with all his knowledge could do. He published *A Catalogue of Plants growing about Nottingham*, 1738, 8vo.—*An Account of an Improved Method of treating the Small Pox*, 1737, 8vo.—and wrote a Latin account of the Transactions of the Nottinghamshire Horse, which was put up under their colours after their return from Scotland. All these were printed by Mr. Ayscough of Nottingham, who introduced the art of printing there about 1710, and died in London, 1783, æt. 69, leaving one son, the late Rev. Samuel Ayscough of the British Museum.*

ART. DCXCIV. *On the most valuable Materials of Biography, with Extracts from the Letters, and Remarks on the Character, both literary and moral, of Cowper.*

I KNOW not whether it is from an ill-natured triumph, or whether, as I hope and believe, from an amiable sympathy, that those passages in biography and other writings, in which the movements, the foibles, and weaknesses, of the human heart are opened with a frank and undisguised simplicity, are universally read with the keenest interest and delight. Hence it seems, that whatever be the

* From Gent. Mag. Vol. LIII. p. 1014.

variations in shape, dress, and colour, of vanity and affectation, the real internal workings of nature, in the bosoms of human beings, have the strongest similitude. It is by pictures of this kind that the best knowledge is attained, and the most valuable quality of the memoirs of individuals discovered. These delineations afford the best topics for reflection and remark, and cannot be contemplated without deep improvement as well as pleasure. The ordinary incidents of personal history, those superficial events which give no insight into the feelings and sentiments of the individual, are of little attraction, and as little use. For this reason, those letters which were never intended for the public eye; those effusions in moments of strong agitation, in which the emotions of the soul prevail over all form and ceremony and ostentation, constitute the most precious materials for the lives of eminent men.

But however easy it may seem to throw forth these natural and unaffected touches; to seize the primary, genuine, and unforced impressions of the head and the heart; it is a power which few have possessed at all, and still fewer in an exquisite degree. Yet there is a lately deceased author, who was most eminently endowed with this talent. I scarcely need mention the name of COWPER, who, in his *Poems*, and above all, in his *Letters*, has continually exhibited, by a few simple strokes of his pen, these affecting traits. We behold him with a mixture of humility and conscious innocence laying bare all the secrets of his breast, and pointing to all those amiable singularities and imbecilities, of which

the discovery would have made more ordinary minds shrink with abasement. Well indeed does he illustrate how fearfully and wonderfully we are made! In thought so vigorous; in action so timid and weak; in the closet so easy, fluent, natural, copious, and bold; in public so confused, overwhelmed, and dispossessed of himself! Delighted with the cheapest, purest, and most virtuous amusements, yet often losing the relish for every earthly occupation, sinking into the most immoveable gloom, and deprest by the horrors of imaginary despair. Thence, when the deranged chords of his exquisite frame had again recovered their tone, trembling with new sensibility at every breeze, throwing forth new notes of poetic rapture to every air of heaven, and rising, almost to the very last, into notes of music and inspiration, which will never cease to charm as long as our language exists!

When age and sorrow had at length seemed to plunge him into irrecoverable melancholy, when he took little notice of any thing around him, and appeared to labour under all the imbecilities of departed intellect, still he could occasionally write poetry. When he was as helpless as an infant, and had not spoke for days, and perhaps weeks, he still possessed, and occasionally exercised, that high faculty with which nature had pre-eminently endowed him; he could translate, he could write in Latin, and execute that kind of composition which is supposed to require the full command of the best and loftiest powers of his mind. When he sat mute and helpless, and as it seemed totally lost, day after day by the side of Lady Hesketh, as she

employed herself with unexampled kindness in transcribing the rough MSS. of his Homer for the press, still he could promptly resolve any difficulties she found in making out the copy, and had the memory of every passage ready at her call.

I must not pronounce the lot of Cowper on earth happy; but I cannot refrain from saying that I should have preferred it with all its miseries to ordinary felicity. I revere the talents and qualities, which Heaven bestowed on him, with an uncontrollable ardor which no worldly prudence, no cold ungenerous convictions of experience can weaken; and I view the just reputation he attained, and the inexpressible gratification of having been admitted to have possessed and exerted the charm of delighting the world by his poetry, not with envy, but with unabated love and admiration! It is true that such pursuits do not often gratify the mere ostentatious ambition of friends and relations; slights, and vulgar scorn and neglect are the most inevitable attendant of the bard among his neighbours; and the indulgencies, luxuries, and popular respect of wealth and rank and grandeur, which are generally considered the most substantial advantages, must not be hoped for. Yet I am unable to diminish my predilection for the empire of the mind! Many there might be, who, having risen by the exertion of coarser faculties, in the paths of public life, to the pinnacle of honours and riches, surveyed Cowper in his humble abodes at Olney or Weston with pity, or contempt, or rudeness! But while these are already forgotten in the grave where their bones are mouldering with the dirt above which their base

spirits never rose, the voice of the poet is still speaking to all our hearts and fancies, we behold his illuminated countenance, we wander with him over the fields and woods; our souls expand with his sentiments; we moisten his tomb with our tears; we guard his reliques with holy idolatry, and while his immortal part still hovers over us, we propitiate it in heaven!

But let us hear this humble, yet energetic, genius give a few touches of his own character.

1763. "Oh, my good cousin! if I was to open my heart to you, I could shew you strange sights; nothing, I flatter myself, that would shock you, but a great deal that would make you wonder. I am of a very singular temper, and very unlike all the men that I have ever conversed with. Certainly I am not an absolute fool; but I have more weaknesses than the greatest of all the fools I can recollect at present. In short, if I was as fit for the next world, as I am unfit for this, and God forbid I should speak it in vanity, I would not change conditions with any saint in Christendom.——I know not what you expect, but ever since I was born, I have been good at disappointing the most natural expectations. Many years ago, cousin, there was a possibility that I might prove a very different thing from what I am at present. My character is now fixt, and, between friends, is not a very splendid one, or likely to be guilty of much fascination."

1781. "What nature expressly designed me for, I have never been able to conjecture, I seem to myself so universally disqualified for the common and customary occupations and amusements of man-

kind. When I was a boy, I excelled at cricket and football; but the fame I acquired by achievements that way, is long since forgotten; and I do not know that I have made a figure in any thing since."

1780. "So long as I am pleased with an employment, I am capable of unwearied application, because my feelings are all of the intense kind; I never received a *little* pleasure from any thing in my life; if I am delighted it is in the extreme. The unhappy consequence of this temperature is, that my attachment to any occupation seldom outlives the novelty of it. That nerve of my imagination, that feels the touch of any particular amusement, twangs under the energy of the pressure with so much vehemence, that it soon becomes sensible of weariness and fatigue. Hence I draw an unfavourable prognostic, and expect that I shall shortly be constrained to look out for something else" (than drawing). "Then perhaps I may string the harp again, and be able to comply with your demand."

1782. "Caraccioli says, 'There is something very bewitching in authorship, and that he, who has once written will write again.' It may be so—I can subscribe to the former part of his assertion from my own experience, having never found an amusement, among the many I have been obliged to have recourse to, that so well answered the purpose for which I used it. The quieting and composing effect of it was such, and so totally absorbed have I sometimes been in my rhiming occupation, that neither the past nor the future (those themes which to me are so fruitful in regret at other times) had any longer a share in my contemplation. For this reason

I wish, and have often wished, since the fit left me, that it would seize me again; but hitherto I have wished it in vain. I see no want of subjects, but I feel a total disability to discuss them."

1786. "I am not naturally insensible, and the sensibilities that I had by Nature have been wonderfully enhanced by a long series of shocks, given to a frame of nerves that was never very athletic. I feel accordingly, whether painful or pleasant, in the extreme. Am easily elevated and easily cast down. The frown of a critic freezes my poetical powers, and discourages me to a degree that makes me ashamed of my own weakness. Yet I presently recover my confidence again: the half of what you so kindly say in your last, would at any time restore my spirits, and being said by you is infallible. I am not ashamed to confess, that having commenced an author, I am most abundantly desirous to succeed as such. *I have (what perhaps you little suspect me of) an infinite share of ambition*: but with it I have at the same time, as you well know, an equal share of diffidence. To this combination of opposite qualities it has been owing, that, till lately, I stole through life, without undertaking any thing, yet always wishing to distinguish myself. At last I ventured, ventured too in the only path, that at so late a period, was yet open to me, and am determined, if God have not determined otherwise, to work my way through the obscurity that has been long my portion into notice. Every thing, therefore, that seems to threaten this my favourite purpose with disappointment, affects me nearly. I suppose that all ambitious minds are in the same pre-

dicament. He who seeks distinction must be sensible of disapprobation exactly in the same proportion as he desires applause. And now, my precious cousin, I have unfolded my heart to you in this particular, without a speck of dissimulation. Some people, and good people too, would blame me, but you will not, and they I think would blame without just cause. We certainly do not honour God when we bury, or when we neglect to improve as far as we may, whatever talent he may have bestowed on us, whether it be little or much. In natural things, as well as in spiritual, it is a never failing truth, that to him who hath, that is, to him who occupies what he hath diligently, more shall be given. Set me down, therefore, for an industrious rhymer, so long as I shall have the ability, for in this only way is it possible for me, so far as I can see, either to honour God, or to serve man, or even to serve myself." *

1792. "From the age of twenty to thirty-three, I was occupied, or ought to have been, in the study of the law; from thirty-three to sixty I have spent my time in the country, where my reading has been only an apology for idleness, and where, when I had not either a Magazine or a Review, I was sometimes a carpenter, at others a birdcage-maker, or a gardener, or a drawer of landscapes. At fifty years of age I commenced an author. It is a whim that has served me longest and best, and will probably be my last." †

1785. "Dejection of spirits, which I suppose may have prevented many a man from becoming

* Letters I. 190. † Ib. p. 19.

an author, made me one. I find constant employment necessary, and therefore take care to be constantly employed. Manual occupations do not engage the mind sufficiently, as I know by experience, having tried many. But composition, especially of verse, absorbs it wholly." *

1786. "The dew of your intelligence has refreshed my poetical laurels. A little praise now and then is very good for your hard-working poet, who is apt to grow languid, and perhaps careless, without it." †

1787. "A sensible mind cannot do violence even to a local attachment without much pain. When my father died, I was young, too young to have reflected much. He was rector of Berkhampstead, and there I was born. It had never occurred to me that a parson has no fee-simple in the house and glebe he occupies. There was neither tree, nor gate, nor stile in all that country, to which I did not feel a relation, and the house itself I preferred to a palace. I was sent for from London to attend him in his last illness, and he died just before I arrived. Then, and not till then, I felt for the first time, that I and my native place were disunited for ever. I sighed a long adieu to fields and woods, from which I once thought I should never be parted, and was at no time so sensible of their beauties as just when I left them all behind me to return no more." ‡

1790. Acknowledging the gift of a picture of his mother. "The world could not have furnished

* Letters p. 147. † p. 235. ‡ p. 251.

you with a present so acceptable to me, as the picture which you have so kindly sent me. I received it the night before last, and viewed it with a trepidation of nerves and spirits, somewhat akin to what I should have felt, had the dear original presented herself to my embraces. I kissed it, and hung it, where it is the last object, that I see at night, and of course the first on which I open my eyes in the morning. She died when I had completed my sixth year, yet I remember her well, and am an ocular witness of the great fidelity of the copy. I remember too a multitude of the maternal tendernesses which I received from her, and which have endeared her memory to me beyond expression. There is in me, I believe, more of the Donne than of the Cowper, and though I love all of both names, and have a thousand reasons to love those of my own name, yet I feel the bond of nature draw me vehemently to your side. I was thought in the days of my childhood much to resemble my mother, and in my natural temper, of which at the age of fifty-eight, I must be supposed a competent judge, can trace both her, and my late uncle, your father. Somewhat of his irritability, and a little, I would hope, of his, and of her——I know not what to call it, without seeming to praise myself, which is not my intention, but speaking to you, I will even speak out, and say, *good nature*. Add to all this, I deal much in poetry, as did our venerable ancestor, the Dean of St. Paul's, and I think I shall have proved myself a Donne at all points."*

* Letters p. 349.

1792. On his intended journey to visit Mr. Hayley at Eartham in Sussex, he writes: "Could you have any conception of the fears I have had to bustle with, of the dejection of spirits that I have suffered concerning this journey, you would wonder much more that I still courageously persevere in my resolution to undertake it. Fortunately for my intentions, it happens, that as the day approaches, my terrors abate; for had they continued to be what they were a week since, I must, after all, have disappointed you; and was actually once on the verge of doing it. I have told you something of my nocturnal experiences, and assure you now, that they were hardly ever more terrific than on this occasion. Prayer has, however, opened my passage at last, and obtained for me a degree of confidence that I trust will prove a comfortable viaticum to me all the way. On Wednesday therefore we set forth. The terrors that I have spoken of would appear ridiculous to most, but to you they will not, for you are a reasonable creature, and know well, that to whatever cause it be owing (whether to constitution or to God's express appointment) I am hunted by spiritual hounds in the night-season. I cannot help it. You will pity me, and wish it were otherwise; and though you may think there is much of imaginary in it, will not deem it for that reason an evil less to be lamented."*

1793. "In vain has it been, that I have made several attempts to write, since I came from Sussex: unless more comfortable days arrive than I have the

* Letter II. 67.

confidence to look for, there is an end of all writing with me. I have no spirits:—When the Rose came, I was obliged to prepare for his coming by a nightly dose of laudanum—twelve drops suffice; but without them I am devoured by melancholy."*

1794. To Mr. Hayley, in answer to a proposal for engaging in a joint work. "My poor Mary's infirm condition makes it impossible for me at present to engage in a work such as you propose. My thoughts are not sufficiently free, nor have I, or can I, by any means find opportunity: added to which, comes a difficulty, which, though you are not at all aware of it, presents itself to me under a most forbidding appearance: can you guess it? No, not you; neither perhaps will you be able to imagine that such a difficulty can possibly subsist. If your hair begins to bristle, stroak it down again, for there is no need why it should erect itself. It concerns me, not you. I know myself too well not to know, that I am nobody in verse, unless in a corner, and alone, and unconnected in my operations. This is not owing to want of love for you, my brother, or the most consummate confidence in you; for I have both in a degree, that has not been exceeded in the experience of any friend you have, or ever had. But I am so made up; I will not enter into a metaphysical analysis of my strange composition, in order to detect the true cause of this evil; but on a general view of the matter, I suspect that it proceeds from that shyness, which has been my effectual and almost fatal hindrance on many other important

* p. 107.

occasions; and which I should feel, I well know, on this, to a degree that would perfectly cripple me. No! I shall neither do, nor attempt any thing of consequence more, unless my poor Mary get better; nor even then, unless it should please God to give me another nature, in concert with any man. I could not, even with my own father or brother, were they now alive."*

But I must forbear, or I shall transcribe half the poet's letters. Whether it is that there have seldom existed such adequate memorials of men of genius as have been left of Cowper, or whether, as I believe, few have ever been so thoroughly steeped in the well-head of the Muses, it is certain that few are recorded to have possessed qualities so well suited to the inspiration of the lyre. That sensibility which was so excessive, as at times, when it operated on a diseased body, to endanger and overcome his reason, prompted him at other times to inimitable strains of moral pathos, touching sentiment, or brilliant description. In proportion as he was little fitted for the ordinary intercourse, and bustle and intrigues of society, he attained and cherished a state of mind, which qualified him for those compositions by which his name has been endeared to his cotemporaries and consecrated to posterity. Whoever has experienced the delight of such a mood, whoever has felt the intense pleasure of an intellectual occupation, by which he hopes to preserve his name to future ages, can alone appreciate the extent of sufferings which the exercise of such

* Letters II. p. 152.

endowments can counterbalance. It may be asked, whether in the cold tomb he can hear the sounds of admiration which are now lavished upon his poetry; and what recompence there can be in these empty returns for his sorrows and inexpressible afflictions of mind! To this question I am not bold enough to reply: but I can scarcely suppose that the universal desire of being remembered after death, which is felt in every state of society, from the most savage to the most refined, is implanted in us for nothing.

ART. DCXCV. *Traits of the character of Burns, the Poet: with extracts from his letters, and a comparison of his genius with that of Cowper.*

SOME traits of the character of Cowper have been already inserted in the preceding article. Perhaps a few remarks on a still more extraordinary genius of our days may not be unacceptable. The writer is not so presumptuous as to attempt to add any new light to what is contained in the life of BURNS, by Dr. Currie, who, himself, alas! is now to be numbered with the dead; but ventures merely to indulge himself, and, he hopes, some of his readers, in dwelling on a pleasing topic, and, perhaps, in comparing some of the endowments of this gifted Being, with those of the author of *The Task*.

No poet's life ever exhibited colours so much in unison with those of his writings as that of Burns; and as the charms of his poetry excited our curiosity for the memoirs of the man, the latter have raised a new and infinitely increased interest in his com-

positions. Much as I admire the exquisite tenderness and moral delicacy of Cowper's temperament, I confess I am still more delighted with the boldness and vehemence of the bard of Caledonia. "His generous affections, his ardent eloquence, his brilliant and daring imagination*" make him my idol. His proper regard to the dignity of his own powers, his stern and indignant elevation of manners, and due jealousy and repression of the insolence of rank and wealth, are worthy of inexpressible applause.

"Know thine own worth, and reverence the lyre,"

says Beattie, who, however, with a more timid character, does not seem to have entirely acted up to his own advice. Burns knew it well, and extorted respect from the most unwilling. The herd of stupid sensualists, who consider the writer of verses as an idler in childish toys and silly bubbles of air, were awed in his presence. The tones of his voice, the dark frowns of his commanding countenance, the lightning of his eye, produced instantaneous feelings of inferiority and submission, and secured to genius its just estimation.

They who abandon the cause which they ought to support, who shrink before vulgar greatness, and who seem ashamed in public of that on which the reflections of their closets teach them to place the highest veneration, and on which their only claims to notice can be grounded, deserve no common con-

* Currie. Life, 151.

tempt. The courage and high sentiments of Burns placed him far above this meanness.

In a letter to Mr. Cunningham, August 8, 1790, he says

"However, tossed about as I am, if I choose, (and who would not choose) to bind down with the crampets of attention the brazen foundation of integrity, I may rear up the superstructure of independence, and from its daring turrets bid defiance to the storms of fate. And is not this "a consummation devoutly to be wished?"

"Thy spirit, Independence, let me share;
Lord of the lion heart and eagle eye!
Thy steps I follow with my bosom bare,
Nor heed the storm that howls along the sky!"

"Are not these noble verses? They are the introduction of Smollet's Ode to Independence. How wretched is the man that hangs on by the favours of the great! To shrink from every dignity of man, at the approach of a lordly piece of self-consequence, who, amid all his tinsel glitter and stately hauteur, is but a creature formed as thou art, and perhaps not so well formed as thou art, came into the world a puling infant as thou didst, and must go out of it as all men must, a naked corse.* * * * * *

It was not far from the same time, and nearly in the same spirit, that he wrote the following, Jan. 17, 1791, to Mr. Peter Hill.

"Take these two guineas, and place them over

* "The strain of indignant invective goes on some time longer in the stile which our bard was too apt to indulge." Currie's note.

against that **** account of yours! which has gagged my mouth these five or six months! I can as little write good things as apologies to the man I owe money to. O the supreme curse of making three guineas do the business of five! Not all the labours of Hercules, not all the Hebrews' three centuries of Egyptian bondage, were such an insuperable business, such an **** task! Poverty! thou half-sister of death, thou cousin-german of hell! where shall I find force of execration equal to the amplitude of thy demerits? Oppressed by thee, the venerable ancient, grown hoary in the practice of every virtue, laden with years and wretchedness, implores a little, little aid to support his existence from a stony hearted son of mammon, whose sun of prosperity never knew a cloud; and is by him denied and insulted. Oppressed by thee, the man of sentiment, whose heart glows with independence, and melts with sensibility, inly pines under the neglect, or writhes in bitterness of soul, under the contumely of arrogant unfeeling wealth. Oppressed by thee, the son of genius, whose ill starred ambition plants him at the tables of the fashionable and polite, must see in suffering silence his remark neglected, and his person despised, while shallow greatness in his hideous attempts at wit, shall meet with countenance and applause. Nor is it only the family of worth that have reason to complain of thee; the children of folly and vice, though in common with thee the offspring of evil, smart equally under thy rod. Owing to thee, the man of unfortunate disposition and neglected education is condemned as a fool for his dissipation, despised and

shunned as a needy wretch, when his follies as usual bring him to want; and when his unprincipled necessities drive him to dishonest practices, he is abhorred as a miscreant, and perishes by the justice of his country. But far otherwise is the lot of the man of family and fortune. His early follies and extravagance are spirit and fire; his consequent wants are the embarrassments of an honest fellow; and, when to remedy the matter, he has gained a legal commission to plunder distant provinces, or massacre peaceful nations, he returns, perhaps, laden with the spoils of rapine and murder; lives wicked and respected, and dies a **** and a lord!' —Nay, worst of all, alas for helpless woman! the needy prostitute, who has shivered at the corner of the street, waiting to earn the wages of casual prostitution, is left neglected and insulted, ridden down by the chariot wheels of the coroneted RIP, hurrying on to the guilty assignation; she who, without the same necessities to plead, riots nightly in the same guilty trade!

"Well, divines may say of it what they please, but execration is to the mind what phlebotomy is to the body; the vital sluices of both are wonderfully relieved by their respective evacuations*."

Thus it was that the sentiments which breathe in the poetry of Burns constantly animated his own bosom in the intercourse of life. They were not "conjured up" merely "for the occasions" of his Muse. He never felt, thought, or acted, but as a poet. The silent walk, the interesting hour of

* Letter CII. Vol. II. p. 384.

female society, and the rude and boisterous merriment of the feast and the bowl, were all tinctured with the varying emotions of the bard. His powerful sensibilities, too strong to be tinctured with any of that affectation which justly exposes feeble pretenders to ridicule and scorn, found an uncontrouled vent, and constantly fed that stream of living colours, in which his pen was dipped. To the artifices of composition, the trick of combining tawdry or mellifluous words, which

"Play round the 'ear;' but come not to the heart,"

he had never occasion to resort. His mind was always full, and he wrote from it: he only sought for language therefore, as the channel of his thoughts. On this account there is a pervading spirit in his writings, which shines with palpable superiority through their dress.

Dr. Currie has observed, that if fiction be the soul of poetry, as some assert, Burns can have no pretensions to the name of poet. But perhaps Dr. Currie understands the term "fiction" a little too strictly; and the proposition may not be as inconsistent with the undoubted claims of Burns, as he supposes. It is true that Burns's compositions are almost entirely founded on the feelings and circumstances of his own life. He has never shewn an extent of fiction like Shakspeare, who placed himself in a thousand situations and characters remote from his own, and then, by imagining the natural operations of the human bosom under these circumstances, realized fancy, and brought the living characters to our view. But of that fiction which could vary and new-combine the

feelings and incidents of his own experience, could re-create the phantoms of his brain when they were past, could bring them before his mental eye, arrange them in new groupes, and command their vivid attendance, till he had delineated them in language and metre; how few have possessed the power like Burns! If the observation of Dr. Joseph Warton be just, that "Nature is more powerful than fancy, and we can always feel more than we can imagine," (which, perhaps, however, may be doubted) there are some great advantages in this limited species of fiction.

It must not, however, be forgot that Burns has a few claims to the power of fiction in its more enlarged sense. No poem ever more glowed with life than "Robert Bruce's Address to his army, at the battle of Bannockburn." And there are some others written for "Thomson's Scots Airs," and for "Johnson's Scots Musical Museum," of this sort.

But why should I continue the coarse and blundering touches of my pen in endeavouring to draw the portrait of Burns, when he has given us so many sketches himself. Take for instance this, from his "Letter CXXXVI. to Miss C***, Aug. 1793."

"What is said of illustrious descent is, I believe, equally true of a talent for poetry: none ever despised it who had pretensions to it. The fates and characters of the rhyming tribe often employ my thoughts when I am disposed to be melancholy. There is not among all the martyrologies that ever were penned, so rueful a narrative as the lives of the poets. In the comparative of wretches, the criterion is not what they are doomed to suffer, but

how they are formed to bear. Take a being of our kind, give him a stronger imagination and a more delicate sensibility, which between them will ever engender a more ungovernable set of passions than are the usual lot of man; implant in him an irresistible impulse to some idle vagary, such as arranging wild flowers in fantastical nosegays, tracing the grasshopper to his haunt by his chirping song, watching the frisks of the little minnows in the sunny pools, or hunting after the intrigues of butterflies; in short, send him adrift after some pursuit which shall eternally mislead him from the paths of lucre, and yet curse him with a keener relish than any man living for the pleasures that lucre can purchase; lastly, fill up the measure of his woes by bestowing on him a spurning sense of his own dignity, and you have created a wight nearly as miserable as a poet. To you, madam, I need not recount the fairy pleasures the Muse bestows to counterbalance this catalogue of evils. Bewitching poetry is like bewitching woman; she has in all ages been accused of misleading mankind from the councils of wisdom and the paths of prudence, involving them in difficulties, baiting them with poverty, branding them with infamy, and plunging them in the whirling vortex of ruin; yet where is the man but must own that all our happiness on earth is not worthy the name; that even the holy hermit's solitary prospect of paradisaical bliss is but the glitter of a northern sun rising over a frozen region, compared with the many pleasures, the nameless raptures that we owe to the lovely queen of the heart of man*!"

* Vol. II. p. 417, 18, 19.

"This letter is a mixture of gallantry, playfulness, and melancholy truths. That which follows, addressed "to Mrs. Dunlop from Ellisland, New-year's-day morning, 1789," is of a much higher tone.

"This, dear madam, is a morning of wishes, and would to God that I came under the Apostle James's description! "the prayer of a righteous man availeth much." In that case, madam, you should welcome in a year full of blessings: every thing that obstructs or disturbs tranquillity and self-enjoyment should be removed, and every pleasure, that frail humanity can taste, should be yours. I own myself so little a presbyterian, that I approve of set times and seasons of more than ordinary acts of devotion, for breaking in on that habituated routine of life and thought, which is so apt to reduce our existence to a kind of instinct, or even sometimes, and with some minds, to a state very little superior to mere machinery.

"This day, the first Sunday of May, a breezy blue-eyed noon some time about the beginning, and a hoary morning and calm sunny day about the end of autumn; these, time out of mind, have been with me a kind of holiday.

"I believe I owe this to that glorious paper in the Spectator, "The Vision of Mirza;" a piece that struck my young fancy before I was capable of fixing an idea to a word of three syllables: "On the fifth day of the moon, which, according to the custom of my forefathers, I always keep holy, after having washed myself, and offered up my morning devotions, I ascended the high hill of Bagdat, in order

to pass the rest of the day in meditation and prayer."

"We know nothing, or next to nothing, of the structure of our souls, so cannot account for those seeming caprices in them, that one should be particularly pleased with this thing, or struck with that, which, on minds of a different cast, makes no extraordinary impression. I have some favourite flowers in spring, among which are the mountain-daisy, the harebell, the fox-glove, the wild brier-rose, the budding birch, and the hoary hawthorn, that I view and hang over with particular delight. I never hear the loud, solitary whistle of the curlew in a summer noon, or the wild mixing cadence of a troop of grey plovers, in an autumnal morning, without feeling an elevation of soul like the enthusiasm of devotion or poetry. Tell me, my dear friend, to what can this be owing? Are we a piece of machinery, which, like an Eolian harp, passive, takes the impression of the passing accident? Or do these workings argue something within us above the trodden clod? I own myself partial to such proofs of those awful and important realities—a God that made all things—man's immaterial and immortal nature---and a world of weal and woe beyond death and the grave."

This is of a very high tone; but the next exceeds it. It is "Letter CXLVIII. to Mr. Cunningham, dated 25th Feb. 1794."

"Canst thou minister to a mind diseased? Canst thou speak peace and rest to a soul, tost on a sea of troubles, without one friendly star to guide her

course, and dreading that the next surge may overwhelm her? Canst thou give to a frame, tremblingly alive as the tortures of suspence, the stability and hardihood of the rock that braves the blast? If thou canst not do the least of these, why wouldst thou disturb me in my miseries with thy inquiries after me?

"For these two months I have not been able to lift a pen. My constitution and frame were, ab origine, blasted with a deep incurable taint of hypochondria, which poisons my existence. Of late a number of domestic vexations, and some pecuniary share in the ruin of these **** times; losses which, though trifling were yet what I could ill bear, have so irritated me, that my feelings at times could only be envied by a reprobate spirit listening to the sentence that dooms it to perdition.

"Are you deep in the language of consolation? I have exhausted in reflection every topic of comfort. A heart at ease would have been charmed with my sentiments and reasonings; but as to myself I was like Judas Iscariot preaching the gospel; he might melt and mould the hearts of those around him, but his own kept its native incorrigibility.

"Still there are two great pillars that bear us up amid the wreck of misfortune and misery. The one is composed of the different modifications of a certain noble, stubborn something in man, known by the names of courage, fortitude, magnanimity. The other is made up of those feelings and sentiments, which, however the sceptic may deny them, or the enthusiast disfigure them, are yet, I am convinced, component parts of the human soul; those senses of

the mind, if I may be allowed the expression which, connect us with, and link us to, those awful obscure realities, an all-powerful and equally beneficent God, and a world to come beyond death and the grave. The first gives the nerve of combat, while a ray of hope beams on the field. The last pours the balm of comfort into the wounds which time can never cure.

"I do not remember, my dear Cunningham, that you and I ever talked on the subject of religion at all. I know some who laugh at it as the trick of the crafty FEW, to lead the undiscerning MANY; or at most as an uncertain obscurity, which mankind can never know any thing of, and with which they are fools if they give themselves much to do. Nor would I quarrel with a man for his irreligion, any more than I would for his want of a musical ear. I would regret that he was shut out from what to me and to others were such superlative sources of enjoyment. It is in this point of view, and for this reason, that I will deeply imbue the mind of every child of mine with religion. Let me flatter myself, that this sweet little fellow, who is just now running about my desk, will be a man of a melting, ardent, glowing heart; and an imagination, delighted with the painter, and rapt with the poet. Let me figure him, wandering out in a sweet evening, to inhale the balmy gales, and enjoy the growing luxuriance of the spring; himself the while in the blooming youth of life. He looks abroad on all nature, and through Nature up to Nature's God. His soul, by swift, delighting degrees, is rapt above this sublunary sphere, until he can be silent no longer, and

bursts out into the glorious enthusiasm of Thomson,

> 'These, as they change, Almighty Father, these
> Are but the varied God.—The rolling year
> Is full of thee.'

"These are no ideal pleasures; they are real delights; and I ask what of the delights among the sons of men are superior, not to say, equal to them? And they have this precious vast addition, that conscious virtue stamps them for her own; and lays hold on them to bring herself into the presence of a witnessing, judging, and approving God*."

They who most value an insipid propriety and decorum, which are the protection of the dull and the stupid, will consider these ebullitions to be but little recompence for the irregularities of the hard. Their test of a good understanding and amiable character directly terminates in SELF. "What is the indiscretion?" they cry, "that can be redeemed by a few songs?" A few songs! which they would not obtain at the expence of an awkward bow, and an inopportune expression! But if "to make the distant and the future predominate over the present" be "to advance us in the train of intellectual beings," then how high a station does he merit, who lives in a conflict of passions, who endures the heated temperament of fancy, who suffers poverty, neglect, and scorn, and calumny, for the sake of delighting those whom he has never seen, or perhaps heard of, and

* II. p. 441—444.

of charming, by the efforts of his muse, the remote shores of the Atlantic, and generations yet unborn.

The poet's frailties extend but a little way. His imprudences, his ill-timed ardours, his disregard of interest, his sallies of intemperance, and all those excesses which are always bordering on his virtues, affect but himself and a few around him. Of what thousands will his compositions tend to refine the understanding, to melt the heart, and exalt the soul! Burns's personal faults are buried with his personal virtues in the grave,

> "Where they alike in trembling hope repose,
> The bosom of his father and his God."

His works live in full vigour, and will live as long as the language lasts. Of how many a lover will they sooth the sorrows; of how many a soldier will they inflame the patriotism; of how many a genius will they fan the fires! How often will they disperse the gloom of solitude, and appease the agonies of pain! How often will they encourage virtue, and shew vice its ugliness!

That unconquerable love of intellectual fame, which urges the elevated mind

> "To scorn delights, and live laborious days,"

can never indeed be appreciated, or even conceived by these selfish and half-brutal censurers. As they know not how to value its productions, still less can they estimate with candour its concomitant errors and miseries.

"The occupations of a poet," says Dr. Currie, "are not calculated to strengthen the governing

powers of the mind, or to weaken that sensibility which requires perpetual control, since it gives birth to the vehemence of passion as well as to the higher powers of imagination. Unfortunately, the favourite occupations of genius are calculated to increase all its peculiarities; to nourish that lofty pride which disdains the littleness of prudence, and the restrictions of order; and by indulgence, to increase that sensibility which in the present form of our existence is scarcely compatible with peace or happiness, even when accompanied with the choicest gifts of fortune!

"It is observed by one who was a friend and associate of Burns, and who has contemplated and explained the system of animated nature, that no sentient being with mental powers greatly superior to those of men, could possibly live and be happy in this world. "If such a being really existed, continues he, "his misery would be extreme; with senses more delicate and refined, with perceptions more acute and penetrating, with a taste so exquisite, that the objects around him would by no means gratify it, obliged to feed on nourishment too gross for his frame, he must be born only to be miserable, and the continuation of his existence would be utterly impossible. Even in our present condition, the sameness and the insipidity of objects and pursuits, the futility of pleasure, and the infinite sources of excruciating pain, are supported with great difficulty by cultivated and refined minds. Increase our sensibilities, continue the same objects and situation, and no man could bear to live."*

* Smellie. See his Philosophy of Natural History, Vol. I. p. 526.

"Thus it appears that our powers of sensation, as well as all our other powers, are adapted to the scene of our existence; that they are limited in mercy as well as in wisdom.

"The speculations of Mr. Smellie are not to be considered as the dreams of a theorist; they were probably founded on sad experience. The being he supposes "with senses more delicate and refined, with perceptions more acute and penetrating," is to be found in real life. He is of the temperament of genius, and, perhaps, a poet*."

They, whose conduct is not actuated by views of direct benefit to themselves, but who live for the public, and look to no personal advantages but those which are the remote and uncertain result of general esteem and admiration, are considered by the herd of mankind, as of a romantic and enthusiastic character, which is only fitted for the abodes of insanity: an opinion which the passages, cited from Currie and Smellie, will tend to confirm. "What is the use of talents," I hear them say, "which will not enable a man to direct himself; or of an imagination, which makes him melancholy and miserable?" But mark the poet in one of his happier moments! Observe the excess of his enjoyment, exhibited in the Tale of Tam O'Shanter!

——— ——— ae market night,
Tam had got planted unco right;
Fast by an ingle, bleezing finely,
Wi' reaming swats, that drank divinely.

* Currie's Life of Burns, p. 231, 232.

The night drave on wi' sangs and clatter;
And ay the ale was growing better:
The landlady and Tam grew gracious;
Wi' favours secret, sweet, and precious:
The souter told his queerest stories;
The landlord's laugh was ready chorus:
The storm without might rair and rustle,
Tam did na mind the storm a whistle.

Care, mad to see a man sae happy,
E'en drown'd himself amang the nappy,
As bees flee hame wi' lades o' treasure,
The minutes wing'd their way wi' pleasure:
Kings may be blest, but Tam was glorious,
O'er a' the ills o' life victorious.

But pleasures are like poppies spread;
You seize the flower, its bloom is shed;
Or like the snow-falls in the river,
A moment white—then melts for ever;
Or like the borealis race,
That flit ere you can point their place;
Or like the rainbow's lovely form,
Evanishing amid the storm:
Nae man can tether time or tide;
The hour approaches Tam maun ride.

* * * * * *

Before him Doon pours all his floods;
The doubling storm roars thro' the woods;
The lightnings flash from pole to pole;
Near and more near the thunders roll;
When, glimmering thro' the groaning trees,
Kirk-Alloway seem'd in a bleeze;
Thro' ilka bore the beams were glancing;
And loud resounded mirth and dancing.

Inspiring bold John Barleycorn!
What dangers thou canst make us scorn!
&c. &c. &c. &c.

What think you of this, ye dull estimators of selfish pleasures? Do not I again hear you exclaim, "Mad fancies! The sights that Tam O'Shanter describes are not true. But if they were, why bring before our minds what is only adapted to frighten us, and give us pain!" Ye gloriers in your own stupidity, what a pity it is ye wear the form of an intellectual being!

But, for the comfort of the plodders, these rapid and violent movements were wearing out the thread of life too fast. The machine could not endure this violent pace the usual length of time; and Burns died in July 1796, in his thirty-eighth year. He sunk a martyr to his sensibility: a sensibility, to which, though the bitterness of malice and envy will attribute the fatal effects of it to his vicious indulgences, yet it must be recollected that other poets have fallen victims, whose morals have been pure and spotless. The sensibility of Cowper, for a time, overwhelmed his faculties at an age as early as that at which Burns found a refuge in the grave.

The genius of Burns was more sublime than that of Cowper. Both excelled in the familiar: but yet the latter was by nature as well as education more gentle, more easy, and delicate: he had also more of tenuity, while Burns was more concise, more bold, and energetic. They both also abounded in humour, which possessed the same characteristics

in each; one mild, serene, and smiling; the other daring and powerful, full of fire and imagery. The poems of one fill the heart and the fancy with the soft pleasures of domestic privacy, with the calm and innocent occupations of rural solitude, the pensive musings of the moralist, and the chastised indignation of pure and simple virtue: the poems of the other breathe by turns Grief, Love, Joy, Melancholy, Despair and Terror; plunge us in the vortex of passion, and hurry us away on the wings of unrestrained and undirected fancy.

Cowper could paint the scenery of Nature and the simple emotions of the heart with exquisite simplicity and truth. Burns could array the morning, the noon, and the evening in new colours; could add new graces to female beauty, and new tenderness to the voice of love. In every situation in which he was placed, his mind seized upon the most striking circumstances, and combining them anew, and dressing them with all the fairy trappings of his imagination, he produced visions such as none but "poets dream." Wherever he went, in whatever he was employed, he saw every thing with a poet's eye, and clothed it with a poet's tints.

The hearts and tempers of these bards seem to have been cast in moulds equally distinct: while Cowper shrunk from difficulties and was palsied with dangers, we can conceive Burns at times riding with delight in the whirlwind, performing prodigies of heroism, and foremost in the career of a glorious death. We can almost suppose in his athletic form and daring countenance, had he lived in times of barbarism, and been tempted by hard necessity to

forego his principles, such an one as we behold at the head of a banditti in the savage scenery of Salvator Rosa, gilding the crimes of violence and depredation by acts of valour and generosity! In Cowper, on the contrary we view a man only fitted for the most refined state of society, and for the bowers of peace and security.

There is a relative claim to superiority on the side of Burns, on which I cannot lay so much stress as many are inclined to do. I mean his want of education, while the other enjoyed all the discipline and all the advantages of a great public school. If the addiction to the Muses, and the attainment of poetical excellence were nothing more than an accidental application of general talents to a particular species of intellectual occupation, how happens it that among the vast numbers educated at Westminster, or Eton, or Winchester, or Harrow, among whom there must be very many of very high natural endowments, and where day after day, and year after year, they are habituated to poetical composition by every artifice of emulation, and every advantage of precept and example, so few should attain the rank of genuine poets, while Burns in a clay-built hovel, amid the labours of the plough and the flail, under the anxiety of procuring his daily bread, with little instruction and few books, and surrounded only by the humblest society, felt an irresistible impulse to poetry, which surmounted every obstacle, and reached a felicity of expression, a force of sentiment, and a richness of imagery scarce ever rivalled by an union of ability, education, practice, and laborious effort? Thinking

therefore that poetical talent is a bent impressed by the hand of Nature, I cannot give the greatest weight to subsequent artificial circumstances; but yet I must admit that in the case of Burns they were so unfavourable that no common natural genius could have overcome them.

On the contrary, there were some points in the history of Burns more propitious to the bolder features of poetry, than in that of Cowper. He wrote in the season of youth, when all the passions were at their height; his life was less uniform, and his station was more likely to encourage energy and enthusiasm, than the more polished and insipid ranks, to which the other belonged. In the circles of fashion, fire and impetuosity are deemed vulgar; and with the roughnesses of the human character all its force is too often smoothed away. An early intercourse with the upper *mobility* is too apt to damp all the generous emotions, and make one ashamed of romantic hopes and sublime conceptions. From blights of this kind the early situation of Burns protected him. The heaths and mountains of Scotland, among which he lived, braced his nerves with vigour, and cherished the bold and striking colours of his mind.

But it seems to me vain and idle to speculate upon education and outward circumstances, as the causes or promoters of poetical genius. It is the inspiring breath of Nature alone, which gives the powers of the genuine bard, and creates a ruling propensity, and a peculiar cast of character which will rise above every impediment, but can be substituted by neither art nor labour. To write mellifluous verses in

language which may seem to the eye and the ear adorned with both imagery and elegance, may be a faculty neither unattainable, nor even uncommon. But to give that soul, that predominance of thought, that illuminated tone of a living spirit, which spring in so inexplicable a manner from the chords of the real lyre, is beyond the reach of mere human arrangement, without the innate and very rare gift of the Muse. That gift has regard neither to rank, station, nor riches. It shone over the cradles of Surry, and Buckhurst, amid the splendour of palaces, and the lustre of coronets; it shone over those of Milton, and Cowley, and Dryden, and Gray, and Collins, amid scenes of frugal and unostentatious competence and mediocrity; it shone over that of Burns, in the thatched hovel, the chill abode of comfortless penury and humble labour.

If there be any who doubt whether, in the exercise of this gift, Burns contributed to his own happiness, let them hear the testimony of himself. "Poesy," says he to Dr. Moore, "was still a darling walk for my mind; but it was only indulged in according to the humour of the hour. I had usually half a dozen, or more pieces on hand; I took up one or other as it suited the momentary tone of the mind, and dismissed the work as it bordered on fatigue. My passions, when once lighted up, raged like so many devils, till they got vent in rhyme, and then the conning over my verses, like a spell, soothed all into quiet*!" In truth, without regard to happiness, or misery, the impulse of the true poet towards his occupation is generally irresistible, even to the neglect of all, to which prudence and self-

* Life, p. 48.

interest imperiously dictate his attention. Thus placed in the conflict of opposite attractions he too often falls a victim to the compunctions of mental regret, and the actual stripes of worldly adversity. But the dye is cast; even the misery, which is endured in such a cause, is dear to him; and the hope that his memory will live, and the pictures of his mind be cherished when his bones are mouldering in the dust, is a counterpoise to more than ordinary sufferings!

I do not mean to encourage the idea, that the imprudences*, and much less the immoralities, of

* I include not pecuniary imprudences, for which, I think, he has been unjustly censured. He had expended in nine years the subscription money of his poems—but how had he expended it? Partly in an unsuccessful farm; partly in assisting his friends, and partly in aid of his slender income. His contempt for money, especially as he had suffered from infancy the effects of actual penury, was highly noble and generous. I cannot agree with some critics, that he had no cause to complain of want of due patronage. Was the mean place of an exciseman, with a salary of from 35l. to 50l. a year proper for Burns after his merits were acknowledged, and his literary genius deemed a national honour? Is it wonderful, that upon such an income, such a man, who was encouraged to give up his mind to poetry, which rendered him unfit to improve it, was uneasy and discontented? He died out of debt;—but he had saved nothing!—Unpardonable imprudence!!! We are told, indeed, that an increase of income would only have increased the indulgence of his intemperance—a very generous mode of reconciling us to the hardships of his lot;—and as if intemperance was generally found to increase with affluence! Considering how immense is the present patronage of government, I must consider the neglect of Burns, whose powers had been duly appreciated, a stigma upon the age; and it is but candid to believe that more easy circumstances of fortune would have materially tended to soften the most objectionable habits of his last years, and perhaps have prolonged his life. Many points of this subject remain untouched; but the limits of this Number call on me to stop my pen.

Burns, were absolutely inseparable from the brilliance of his talents, or the sensibilities of his heart. I am not justifying, I only attempt to plead for them, in mitigation of the harsh and narrow censures of malignity and envy. I call on those of dull heads and sour tempers to judge with candour and mercy, to respect human frailties, more especially when redeemed by accompanying virtues, and to enter not into the garden of Fancy with implements too coarse, lest in the attempt to destroy the weeds, they pluck up also all the flowers.

September 23, 1805.

ART. DCXCVI. MISS JONES, (Poetess.)

"MISS JONES," says T. Warton, "lived at Oxford, and was often of our parties. She was a very ingenious poetess, and published a volume of Poems; and on the whole, was a most sensible, agreeable, and amiable woman.. She was sister to the Rev. River Jones, Chanter of Christ-Church Cathedral at Oxford, and Johnson used to call her the Chantress. I have heard him often address her in this passage from 'Il Penseroso.'

'Thee, Chantress, oft the woods among
I woo,' &c.

She died unmarried." *

ART. DCXCVII. F. LEWIS.

SOME of the Mottos to Johnson's Rambler "were very happily translated," says Boswell, "by F. Lewis, of whom I have never heard more, except that Johnson thus described him to Mr. Malone; 'Sir, he lived in London, and hung loose upon society.'"

* Boswell's Life of Dr. Johnson, I. p. 295.

Art. DCXCVIII. PROFESSOR PORSON.

"On October . . the remains of Professor Porson were removed, from the house of the London Institution in the old Jewry, in order to be deposited in Trinity College Chapel, Cambridge. The directors of the institution ordered the house to be shut for the day, and the under librarians and other officers assisted in the solemnity. The procession from London consisted of four mourning coaches, followed by six private carriages: and the persons who attended him were his relatives and most intimate friends.

At half after two o'clock on Tuesday afternoon the hearse arrived at Trinity College, Cambridge, and was received at the great gate and conveyed to the hall, where, according to the ancient usage, in cases where this distinguished tribute of respect is paid to a member, the body lay in state till five o'clock.

At which the Lord Bishop of Bristol, Master of the College, the Vice-Master, Senior and Junior Fellows, Bachelors of Arts, scholars, and other members resident in the university, in their academical habits, and in black scarfs, bands, and gloves, walked from the combination room, accompanied by the chief mourners into the hall; and after moving round the body, which was placed in the midst, they took their seats, the chief mourners being placed on the right hand and left of the master. Upon the pall, several epitaphs in Greek and English verse, the effusions of reverential respect for his high attainments and of love for his virtues, were placed on

the pall, and were read with the most sympathetic interest by his former associates in study. An anthem was chaunted by the choir. After which the body was raised by the bearers, and a most solemn procession was made round the great quadrangle of the college, from the hall to the chapel, in the following order:

Two Porters.

Singing Men and Boys, two and two.

Mr. Wilson the Undertaker.

A Page. The Feather-lid. A Page.

Dr. Davy, Physician Mr. Oakes, Apothecary.

The Rev. John Shepherd, Minister of Trin. Church. } { The Rev. —— Henshaw, Conduct of the Chapel.

The Lord Bishop of Bristol.

Master.

Rev. — Hudson, Rev. G. F. Tavell.

Rev. Dr. Ramsden, Rev. J. Hailstone,

Rev. Dr. Raine, Rev. J. Davis,

Rev. J. Lambert, Rev. J. H. Renouard, Vice Master.

THE BODY, Supported by the eight senior Fellows.

Chief Mourners.

James Perry, and Sidny Hawes, Jun.

Brother in Law, and Nephew of the deceased.

Junior Fellows, two and two.

Bachelors, two and two.

Scholars, two and two.

Pensioners, two and two.

Mr. John Newby, Clerk of the Chapel.

And other Servants of the College, two and two.

On entering the chapel, which was illuminated, the Lord Bishop, chief mourners, and all the members of the college, took their places, and the choir performed an anthem.

After which the Lord Bishop read the lesson, and the procession moved in the same order to the grave, which was at the foot of the statue of Sir Isaac Newton, and surrounded by those of all the illustrious persons, which this great and distinguished college has produced. When they had taken their stations around the grave, and the body was placed above it ready for interment, the funeral anthem was performed by the choir in the adjoining chapel, during the most perfect silence of the auditory, and with the most solemn effect.

The service was then read by the Lord Bishop with such an awful, dignified, and impressive pathos, as we never witnessed on any former solemnity of the kind. He was himself overwhelmed as he proceeded by his feelings; and he communicated the sympathetic emotion to every listening friend of the deceased. Nothing could be more solemn nor more affecting than his tone and delivery. The senior members of the college, who had lived with the Professor in habits of the most endearing intercourse for thirty years, and who had had the best means of estimating the wonderful height and variety of his attainments, shed tears of sorrow over the grave; and the whole assembly displayed a feeling of grief and interest, which bespoke the sense they entertained of the irreparable loss that not only their own society, but the literary world had suffered by his death.

The following was the simple inscription engraved in brass on his coffin:—

RICARDUS · PORSON ·
APUD · CANTABRIGIENSES ·

LINGUAE · GRAECAE · PROFESSOR ·
ET
COLL. · TRIN. · S. · S. · ET · IND. · OLIM. · SOCIUS
APUD · LONDINENSES ·
INSTITUTIONIS · LITTERARIAE ·
BIBLIOTHECARIUS · PRINCEPS ·
NATUS · VIII. · CAL. · IAN. · MDCCLX. ·
OBIIT. · VIII. · CAL. · OCT. · MDCCCVIII."

Mr. Professor Porson was born at East Ruston, in Norfolk, on Christmas Day, 1759; so that he was only in his forty-ninth year. Every thing about this most eminent scholar, and particularly the circumstances which laid the foundation of that most inestimable memory by which he was enabled to store his mind with all the riches of literature, ancient and modern, will become truly interesting to the world. He owed the blessing to the care and judgment of his father, Mr. Huggin Porson, who was parish clerk of East Ruston, and who, though in humble life, and without the advantages himself of early education, laid the basis of his son's unparalleled acquirements. From the earliest dawn of intellect, Mr. Porson began the task of fixing the attention of his children, three sons and a daughter, and he had taught Richard, his eldest son, all the common rules of arithmetic, without the use of book or slate, pen or pencil, up to the cube root, before he was nine years of age. The memory was thus incessantly exercised; and by this early habit of working a question in arithmetic by the mind only, he acquired such a talent of close and intense thinking, and such a power of arranging every operation that occupied his thought, as in

process of time to render the most difficult problems, which to other men required the assistance of written figures, easy to the retentive faculties of his memory. He was initiated in letters by a process equally efficacious. His father taught him to read and write at one and the same time. He drew the form of the letter either with chalk on a board, or with the finger on sand; and Richard was made at once to understand and imitate the impression. As soon as he could speak he could trace the letters; and this exercise delighting his fancy, an ardour of imitating whatever was put before him was excited to such a degree, that the walls of the house were covered with characters which attracted notice, from their neatness and fidelity of delineation.

At nine years of age, he and his youngest brother, Thomas, were sent to the village school, kept by a Mr. Summers, a plain but most intelligent and worthy man, who having had the misfortune in infancy to cripple his left hand, was educated for the purpose of teaching, and he discharged his duties with the most exemplary attention. He professed nothing beyond English, writing, and arithmetic—but he was a good accountant, and an excellent writing-master. He perfected the Professor in that delightful talent of writing, in which he so peculiarly excelled; but which we are doubtful whether it was to be considered as an advantage or detriment to him in his progress through life. It certainly had a considerable influence on his habits, and made him to devote many precious moments to copying, which might have been better employed in composition. It has been the means, however, of enriching

his library with annotations, in a text the most beautiful, and with such perfect imitation of the original manuscript or printing, as to embellish every work which his erudition enabled him to elucidate. He continued under Mr. Summers for three years; and every evening during that time he had to repeat by heart to his father the lessons and the tasks of the day; and this not in a loose or desultory manner, but in the rigorous order in which whatever he had been occupied about had been done; and thus again the process of recollection was cherished and strengthened, so as to become a quality of his mind. It was impossible that such a youth should remain unnoticed, even in a place so thinly peopled, and so obscure as the parish of East Ruston. The Rev. Mr. Hewitt heard of his extraordinary propensities to study, his gift of attention to whatever was taught him, and the wonderful fidelity with which he retained whatever he had acquired. He took him and his brother Thomas under his care, and instructed them in the classics. The progress of both was great, but that of Richard was most extraordinary. It became the topic of astonishment in that district, and when he had reached his fourteenth year, had engaged the notice of all the gentlemen in the vicinity. Among others, he was mentioned as a prodigy to an opulent and liberal man, the late Mr. Norris, who, after having put the youth under an examination of the severest kind, and from which an ordinary boy would have shrank dismayed, he was sent to Eton. This happened in the month of August 1774, when he was in his fifteenth year: and in that great seminary, he

almost, from the commencement of his career, displayed such a superiority of intellect, such facility of acquirement, such quickness of perception, and such a talent of bringing forward to his purpose all that he had ever read, that the upper boys took him into their society, and promoted the cultivation of his mind by their lessons, as well, probably, as by imposing upon him the performance of their own exercises. He was courted by them as the never-failing resource in every difficulty; and in all the playful excursions of the imagination, in their frolics, as well as in their serious tasks, Porson was the constant adviser and support. He used to dwell on this lively part of his youth with peculiar complacency, and we have heard him repeat a drama which he wrote for exhibition in their long chamber, and other compositions, both of seriousness and drollery, with a zest that the recollection of his enjoyment at the time never failed to revive in him. We fear, however, that at this early age his constitution received a shock, which was soon after aggravated by the death of his worthy patron. An impostbume formed on his lungs, and he was threatened by a consumption. But it fortunately broke, and he recovered his health, though his frame was weakened.

The death of Mr. Norris was the source of severe mortification to him; for though by the kindness of some eminent and liberal persons he was continued at Eton, he felt the loss he had sustained in the most poignant degree. But we do not mean to do more than trace the dates of his progress to the Professor's chair. He was entered of Trinity College

towards the end of 1777, and his character having gone before him to the University, he was, from the first, regarded as a youth whose extraordinary endowments would keep up and extend the reputation of the unrivalled society into which he had entered. Nor did he disappoint the hopes that had been formed of him. In every branch of study to which he applied himself, his course was so rapid as to astonish every competent observer. By accidents, which in a more detailed biographical article will be explained, he was drawn first to read in mathematics, in which, from his early exercises, he was so eminently calculated to shine, but from which he drew no benefit; and then by the prospect of a scholarship, which however did not become vacant till long after, he sat down to the Classics. In this pursuit he soon acquired undisputed pre-eminence. He got the medal of course, and was elected a Fellow, in 1781. In 1785, he took his degree of Master of Arts: but long before the period had elapsed when he must either enter into holy orders or surrender his fellowship, he had, (after the most grave and deliberate investigation, to which he had brought all that acute gift of examination that has been made so perceptible in his letters to Mr. Archdeacon Travis), made up his mind on the subject of subscription. We are sure that his determination cost him many painful and laborious days and months of study. His heart and mind were deeply penetrated by the purest sentiments of religion; and it was a memorable and most estimable feature of his character, that in no moment, the most unguarded, was he ever known to utter a single

expression of discontent at the establishment, or derision at those who thought differently from himself, much less of profanation or impiety. He was truly and actively pious. So early as 1788, he had made up his mind to surrender his Fellowship, though with an enfeebled constitution he had nothing to depend upon but acquirements that are very unprofitable to the owner. A lay fellowship to be sure might have secured his services to the cause of letters; but the disingenuous conduct of an individual withheld from him that resource. In 1791, his Fellowship ceased, and he was thrown upon the world without a profession, his feelings wounded by the mortifications he had suffered, and with a constitution little qualified to encounter the bustle of the world. Some private friends, however, stept in, and soon after he was elected Greek Professor of Cambridge, by an unanimous vote of the seven electors. The distinction of this appointment was grateful to him. The salary is but 40*l.* a year. It was his earnest wish, however, to have made it an active and efficient office, and it was his determination to give an annual course of lectures in the college, if rooms had been assigned him for the purpose. These lectures, as he designed, and had in truth made preparations for them, would have been invaluable; for he would have found occasion to elucidate the languages in general, and to have displayed their relations, their differences, their near and remote connexions, their changes, their structure, their principles of etymology, and their causes of corruption. If any man was qualified for this gigantic task, it was Mr. Professor Porson;

and if his wishes had not been counteracted, we know that he would have undertaken the labour.

From this time, instead of lectures, he turned his thoughts to publication. His Letters to Mr. Archdeacon Travis, as has been truly said, put the controversy on the disputed text to rest; and indeed it was the peculiar felicity of his mind, that whatever he undertook to elucidate, he fixed for ever in the light.

In 1795 he married Mrs. Luman, the sister of Mr. Perry, of the *Morning Chronicle*, but who sunk under a decline in April 1797, and from that time the Professor himself was so incessantly afflicted with a spasmodic asthma, as to interrupt him in every study to which he applied himself. Whether his sedentary habits served to bring it on we know not, but certainly very few men had accustomed themselves to such patient and continued toil. He had undertaken to make out and copy the almost obliterated manuscript of the invaluable *Lexicon* of Photius, which he had borrowed from the library of Trinity College. And this he had, with unparalleled difficulty, just completed, when the beautiful copy which had cost him ten months of incessant toil, was burnt in the house of Mr. Perry at Merton. The original being an *unique*, intrusted to him by his college, he carried with him wherever he went, and he was fortunately absent from Merton on the morning of the fire. Unruffled by the loss, he sat down without a murmur, and made a second copy as beautiful as the first. It is extant in his library, and is quite ready for the press. Of the plays of Euripides, which he published, the learned world has

pronounced its judgment. It may be pleasant for our readers, however, to know, that he has left an *Orestes* quite ready for the press.

On the establishment of the London Institution, the managers manifested their own discernment and love of letters, by selecting him to be their principal librarian, an appointment for which he was peculiarly qualified; and if time and health had been allowed him, he would have made their library truly valuable. His own, which he has been gradually collecting for thirty years, he has enriched by annotations of such value and importance to literature, that we hope and trust the whole will be placed in his own college, that it may for ever be within the reach of those whom his example may arouse to similar pursuits, though they may despair of reaching equal attainments.

Mr. Porson, as we have stated before, had, for the last eleven years been a victim of spasmodic asthma, during the agony of which he never went to bed, and in which he was forced to abstain from all sustenance. This greatly debilitated his body; and about a month ago he was afflicted by an intermittent fever; he had an unfortunate objection to medical advice, and he resorted to his usual remedy of abstinence; but on Monday the 19th ult. he suffered an apoplectic stroke, from which he recovered only to endure a second attack the next day. He languished to the Sunday night, and expired without a struggle. The body was opened, by his medical men, and they have given a report, ascribing his death "to the effused lymph in and upon the brain, which they believe to have been the effect of recent

inflammation. The heart was sound, and the pericardium contained the usual quantity of lymph. The left lung had adhesions to the pleura, and bore the marks of former inflammation. The right lung was in a perfectly sound state." This is signed by Dr. Babington, Sir William Blizard, Mr. Norris, Mr. Blizard, and Mr. Upton. In refutation of an idle falsehood about the form of his skull, they add, "that it was thinner than usual, and of hard consistence."

Mr. Porson has left a sister living, an amiable and accomplished woman. She is the wife of Sidny Hawes, Esq. of Coltishall, in Norfolk; they have five children; their eldest son is entered of Bene't College, Cambridge. Henry, the second brother of the Professor, was settled in a farm in Essex, and died young, leaving three children. His brother Thomas kept a boarding school at Fakenham, an excellent scholar, and died in 1792, without issue—and his father, Mr. Huggin Porson, died in 1805, in his 74th year. His mother died in 1784, aged 57." *Courier.*

Art. DCXCIX. REV. EDWARD TYMEWELL BRYDGES.

Died, Oct. 17, 1807, at his seat at Wootton Court, near Canterbury, aged fifty-eight, the Rev. Edward Tymewell Brydges, the late Claimant to the Barony of Chandos. He had been long in a declining state of health, and bore many bodily sufferings with exemplary patience and cheerfulness. His good qualities were striking and attractive: a

warmth of heart, a generosity of temper, an elegance, and eloquence of manners, and a certain playfulness and originality of humour, engaged the approbation of most people, and the interest of all. Though occasionally fond of retirement, he had mixed widely with the world; and if his ductile spirit did not always profit of his experience, it arose from a venial confidence, which, if not prudent, was at least engaging. He was a good scholar; of quick apprehension, keen natural taste, and much irregular reading; but his wit was sometimes too sarcastic to be relished; and his irony too doubtful to be perfectly understood.

The long litigation in which he was engaged for the admission of his right to the Peerage of his ancestors, with the unexpected decision, that he had not satisfactorily made out his claim, which took place after a division in a thin House, in June 1803, on a day when the determination was not anticipated, and when many of those who supported his case were absent, affected deeply both his peace of mind, and the strength of his constitution. The discussion lasted more than thirteen years, having commenced immediately after the death of James the third and last Duke of Chandos, in Sept. 1789. He claimed the Barony only (not the higher honours) in right of a descent from the third son of Sir John Brydges, the first Peer, so created in 1554. He had a vast field of prior branches to clear away; and he had six or seven generations in his own line to establish. There are certain pieces of evidence which the experience and wisdom of the law has long established as proofs of certain facts, which are not to

be disputed. These are just and necessary barriers against the caprice of individual opinion. Even if we could suppose that these rules will sometimes lead to a wrong conclusion, it is better that human affairs should be subjected to this occasional and rare error, than to the fluctuation and uncertainty of each man's private conviction. Every one, who is conversant with the world, must have observed the unaccountable whims, on which the judgment of a large mass of the people is dependent. Circumstances which appear trifles too light to be noticed by one man, operate like conviction on another. Prejudices, which are treated with just scorn by the sound and honest mind, have the force of certainty with the thoughtless and weak. Cunning men who are interested to mislead, know too well what use to make of this imperfection. The Claimant, however, thinking it unnecessary to satisfy all the nonsense of extrajudicial misconception and false rumour, was advised to rest his case on the basis of having fulfilled the proofs required by the law. His friends and advisers thought, and still think, those proofs were such as would have entitled him to a direction from a judge at Nisiprius to a jury, to find a verdict for him, in a trial for estates. However it is well-known that a gradual opposition had so inflamed itself in its progress, (from whatever motives arising) as to have become not only uncommonly violent, but such as the claimant and his friends could not help considering to be rancorous. They complained that in this spirit much irrelevant and injurious matter was mixed up with this cause, which could neither be established under the pro-

tection of legal rules, nor could have any just concern with the question in dispute. The cause at last became complicated, by these means, with so much of what was extraneous, as to confound common minds, and to perplex even men of business who had not much time to spare for it. If there were in this claim no real grounds of perplexity, much less such difficulties as occurred in the celebrated Douglas cause, of which an ample account has been preserved in a former part of these volumes, yet many persons seemed at last to heat their minds into doubts and intricacies almost as violent as in that extraordinary question. But this is not the place to enter into full details of this cause: and it would be prejudicial to give them imperfectly, and without the full statements and proofs, which those who are intimately acquainted with it can furnish. In truth after the lapse of eight years since the claimant's death was announced; after the irritation, which the recency of the cause then produced on the writer's mind, has been in some degree softened by the course of events, and the new current of other important subjects, he conceives he should debase himself by repeating defences and indignations, which, natural as they were at a moment of unjust and unprovoked attack, it would have been a virtuous elevation, almost more than human, then to have borne in total silence; but which it would now be not only unnecessary, but highly unbecoming to renew. The writer's habits, the parents from whom he draws his being, his education, his character, his station, place him above being suspected by the candid, the virtuous, or the wise, of seeking the inheritance even

of the highest honours by dishonourable means, or without a previous conviction of his right to them. Cruel and unfounded calumny is among the bitter evils of this world, for which there is too often no remedy. He who stabs in the dark, who dares not exhibit himself in his own person, can only be instigated by the deepest and most unqualified wickedness. To suppose it possible that the highest tribunals may sometimes be led into error in their decisions, and to express that supposition in decent and not disrespectful language, free from the charge of imputing bad and corrupt motives, surely neither is, nor ever was, in this free country, a great and flagrant crime: nor can it for a moment form a justification or even apology for the vindictive and malignant abuse of every one who exercises this freedom. Mr. Brydges had an indignant and elevated spirit, and his disappointment in losing an object, of which he believed his right to be unquestionable, was much aggravated by the manner in which he had been opposed. He had even a morbid sensibility; and a liveliness to dishonour, reproach, or even neglect, which amounted almost to disease. During his father's life he resided principally at Cambridge, where he enjoyed a Fellowship at Queen's College; and where he cultivated a literary acquaintance, by whom he was much cherished and beloved. Gray the poet, in particular, was pleased with his polished and gentle manners, and his taste for elegant literature. Perhaps however he had never been a severe student, and his acquirements were rather those in the walks of sentiment and imagination, than of severe thinking. About his

thirtieth year he took possession of two family livings; and about two years afterwards removed to the family mansion, which he made his principal abode for the remainder of his life: interrupted however by long residences in London during the many years' prosecution of his claim.

Mr. Brydges's father had passed his whole life, after leaving the University of Cambridge, as a country gentleman, in the bosom of a large family. The son therefore was not likely in his early age to contract habits which would peculiarly fit him for the management of any concern which requires strict and attentive powers of business, acute knowledge of mankind in the most conflicting intercourses of society, and an uncommon application of worldly skill. Frank, ductile, unsuspicious, and unguarded, he continually fell into the snares of those, who meant to betray his confidence, and make a perverted use of his sentiments or expressions. In any case therefore, which might involve a great quantity of complex intrigues and prejudices, from whatever quarter they might come, or by whatever motives of opposition, whether interest, or envy, or malice, or revenge, they might be stimulated, Mr. B. was ill qualified to contend. In the bitterness and indignant feelings of long-protracted litigation, by which his spirits were exhausted, and his expences cruelly aggravated, he sent at last a printed circular letter to the Members of the Upper House, soliciting their attendance as a matter not of favour, but of justice; and marked perhaps but too evidently with the tone of an injured man, rather demanding right with-held, than conveying notice

untinctured with a suspicion of wrong. It was the emanation of a gentlemanly and high spirit, decisively proving his conviction of the rectitude of his own cause; and so far, recorded as it is on the Journals of the Lords, will always do honour to his memory. But it was so palpably injudicious, so obviously dangerous to the success of his own cause, that it can only be accounted for by those weaknesses of his character, which have been here perhaps too frankly delineated. Had he consulted those, whose judgment was least likely to mislead him, before he took that most unlucky step, they would to the utmost of their influence have prevented it. The instant it became known to them, though perhaps they neither did nor could anticipate the extent of the mischief, they were struck with wonder and dismay at the useless imprudence of such an act.

It was instantly seized upon as an attempt to canvass the Lords. A motion was made on it: and several Peers expressed themselves warmly on the occasion, urging it, if the writer's memory does not fail him, as amenable to the privileges of the House: of which of course they are highly jealous, as it behoves them to be. Even the illustrious Peer, who sat on the Woolsack, and whose mildness, patience, and justice, so eminently distinguished him, who, in his minute, impartial, yet luminous summing up of the case, a few days before, had shewn his leaning towards the right and truth of the cause, now grew angry and almost vehement on this incidental point. The opponents of the claim, out of doors, saw at once the tide thus turned by this accident in their favour. In this unpropitious temperament a deci-

sion, which had been delayed from month to month, and year to year, now took place; and on a division in a thin House, it was resolved by the majority, that the proof which the claimant had yet offered was not sufficient to establish his right. He took this resolution deeply to heart, perhaps more deeply than would have become a very firm and exalted spirit. In July of this year (1803) he fell dangerously ill, and lingered, with short intervals of ease, for more than four years, when the grave released him from his mental mortifications, and dreadful bodily sufferings; for the stone had long agonized him, and was the immediate cause of his dissolution. He left no surviving child; but his widow enjoys a jointure out of the family estate of near 3000l. a year. In addition to the claims of descent in the male line, which centered in him, he was of most illustrious blood on the female side. His mother was an heiress of a very well-allied branch of the great family of Egerton; and he thus quartered, unmingled with any stain, as well the arms of the royal houses of Plantagenet and Tudor, as of a large portion of the most ancient and powerful of the old nobility. If he now and then dwelt with a little more display on these subjects than seems to be allowed to the wise or the prudent, there were peculiar circumstances which provoked it, and may almost apologize for it. This branch of his great Baronial family had been long separated from their head. Two centuries, and a distant county had long taken from them all community of connection and kindness. The male derivatives of two elder branches had at one period

been considerably multiplied. The gradual decline and extinction of these intervening families, was little known, and when the pretensions to the family honours devolved on the claimant, it was so unexpected to many of those who had only contemplated this branch in the character of private gentlemen, that it instantly begat a long course of rancorous misrepresentations, falsehoods, and prejudices. These sometimes gave occasion to a display of alliance, which in common cases might well have been deemed ostentation and vanity. It would perhaps have been almost stupid, not, under such provocation, to shew that the alliances of this branch were so far from derogating from those to whose honours a claim was preferred, that they were at least on a par with them. But here again Mr. B.'s fluctuating and ductile temper rather urged with indiscreet impetuosity, than persevered with calm dignity.

Mr. B., had his life taken a different course, might have excelled in some kinds of literary composition. He read with uncommon elegance and sweetness of voice; and, if he had cultivated it, would, I think, have arrived at a very beautiful elocution. His style of preaching was admirable.

He was buried in the family vault at Wootton, eight miles from Canterbury, and the same distance from Dover.

THE RUMINATOR;

CONTAINING

A SERIES OF MORAL AND SENTIMENTAL ESSAYS.

"Meditation here
May think down hours to moments. Here the heart
May give an useful lesson to the head."

COWPER.

ART. DCC.

N°. I. *On the consequences of War; with a poem in commendation of the Feudal Times.*

IN the multiplicity of subjects that offer themselves to a contemplative mind for consideration, I have experienced the common consequence of fulness of choice; I have deferred it till it is too late to do justice to any. But I will wave the formality of an introduction, which, from the practice of former Essayists, is become too trite to interest; and proceed to make use of such materials, as are ready at my call; trusting to futurity to develope my plans, and bestow strength on my progress.

It is too well known, that refinement and luxury in all nations, at all times, have gone hand in hand; and that with wealth and prosperity have been

sown the seeds of corruption, decline, and ruin. Some fluctuations there will be in all states; wars and even misfortunes may call forth a temporary energy, even after the commencement of a fall; and I am not sure that even those scenes of peculiar and unexampled distress and danger, which the Continent of Europe has experienced for the last fifteen years, may not procrastinate the total predominance of barbarism, and for a little while prolong some of the institutions of social order.

The amiable and enlightened Cowper, now and then, suffered under a passing cloud of narrow prejudice. He has said, that

> "War is a game, which, were their subjects wise,
> Kings would not play at."

I take for granted, he does not mean to allude merely to particular instances of a wanton exercise of prerogative in a Sovereign, by engaging in a war from motives of personal ambition, contrary to the wishes of his people, (cases that do perhaps occur, yet not very often); but to war in general, which he assumes to originate in this way.

Now I do not believe that wars in general are principally attributable to kings; still less do I believe that kings have entered into them for their own amusement; and least of all, that their consequences are so mischievous as the passage cited from Cowper seems to insinuate. The horrors of a field of battle, scenes of blood-shed, and devastation, and famine, are apt subjects for the powerful descriptions of a poet; and from such, results the moral (a little too encouraging to popular pre-

judices) of the affecting work of a living poet, one of the most beautiful writers* perhaps, which this nation ever produced; I mean, of the Joan of Arc of Southey! But from these partial evils, deep as they often are, I am convinced that there springs a great deal of good. They awaken a nation from that state of stupefaction, sensuality, and effeminacy, which are its worst and most fatal disease: they dispel apathy, foster a generous and energetic spirit, accustom the body to wholesome exercise and toil, and nerve the mind against the hour of adversity and privation.

It is well remembered that, when, at the close of the late reign, the celebrated Dr. Brown, in his "Estimate," represented this nation, as sunk into the lowest state of feminine debility, the energy of Lord Chatham's administration, and the vigorous war which he carried on, electrified the kingdom, and raised it in a short period to a point of unexampled glory and renown, both for its wisdom and its heroism. Have we not seen similar effects from the late war? Compare the energy of the present race of males in all ranks of society, with the habits of those who predominated in society, during the peace, which followed the American contest! There is a vigour and hardihood in the rising generation, worthy of less luxurious times!

But how long we shall keep off the baneful effects, which commerce never fails at last to produce, I dare not inquire! My imagination at least will never fail to be best pleased with the manners of ages

* I must except his Thalaba.

approaching nearer to those of chivalry! For this reason I shall here venture to insert a poem, congenial to these sentiments, which has hitherto lain unnoticed among my papers.

*Lines on the figure of a Warrior, dressed in Feudal Armour, his shield adorned with an ancient heraldric coat; a Baronial castle in the back ground, on the highest tower of which is displayed a banner, bearing the same insignia; drawn and presented to the author by the Rev. C. W.**

" So shone th' heroic chief in days of old!
Fierce was his mien; his limbs of giant mould;
Beneath the load of cumbrous armour light,
Active he bounded to th' infuriate fight;
Broad was his shield, with bold device imprest,
And on his helmet frown'd the grimly crest:
Yon moated castle's massy walls uprose
To frown defiance on his vassal's foes;
And o'er that shadowy forest's wide domains,
O'er these blue hills, and those extended plains,
O'er many a scatter'd vill, and many a town,
He rul'd by right, by favour, or renown.
Ferocious days, and days of wild alarm,
Yet cheer'd by many a joy, and many a charm,
Which these degenerate times have lost!—For Power
Dwelt with the chief, who own'd the Feudal Tower!

* One, who after one and thirty years of uninterrupted friendship, and after having buffeted with the rage of the yellow fever in the Atlantic, and having afterwards visited all the shores of the Mediterranean, and witnessed the horrors and the glories of the tremendous night, which was illuminated by the battle of the Nile, is returned safe to form one of the few props and comforts of the author's life.

Lord of the generous arts, that win command,
By noble counsel, or by valorous hand,
He knew no rivals in the dastard knaves,
Who spring to wealth from Lucre's base-born slaves;
Who gain rich lands, and feed luxurious boards,
By the vile modes, which groveling Trade affords!
Perchance some Knight of more adventrous name
His spirit's generous envy might enflame,
One, on whose breast with more resplendent fire
Beam'd the red cross, or growl'd the lion's ire;
Who rode with statelier grace the prancing horse,
Or couch'd his quivering lance with mightier force!
E'en tho' his heaving bosom swell'd with pain,
Aspiring wreaths of equal worth to gain,
Still in the grateful strife was glory mix'd,
And Virtue's wishes in his heart were fix'd:
No wealthy son of Commerce bade him hide
Before superior pomp his lessen'd pride,
Nor call'd him with insulting sneers to vie
In the mean race of arts he scorn'd to try:
Honour and rank and wealth he saw await
Toils of the wise, and actions of the great;
Nor mark'd, where'er before his aching eyes
Halls, mansions, castles, palaces, arise,
Wretches usurp them, who in darksome cells
Won their base spoils by Traffic's hated spells!
  Rude was the pile, that from th' impending brow
Of some steep rock upon the wave below
Oft look'd with fearful grandeur; loud the blast
Rav'd on its walls, and thro' its turrets past;
Chill were its sunless rooms, and drear the aisles
Along whose length the night-breeze told her tales;
Massive the walls, thro' which the genial day
Strove with warm breath in vain to win its way:

But jocund was its hall; and gay the feast
That spoke the genuine gladness of the breast,
When rang'd its hospitable boards along,
The warlike bands renew'd th' heroic song;
Or told wild tales, or drank with greedy ear
Romantic ditties, which the Minstrel-Seer
Tun'd to his harp, while, as with bolder fire
He threw his raptur'd hand across the wire,
With visions of new glory beam'd each eye,
And loud the gathering chorus rose on high;
Till shook the rafter'd roof, and every bound
Of the wide castle trembled with the sound.

Rough were the scenes, as was the master's mind,
Which Nature, bordering on th' abode, design'd;
Forests of age untold, whose unpierc'd wood
Ne'er to the labourer's echoing axe had bow'd;
Soft lawns, which mid surrounding coverts spread,
By the wild tenants of the scene were fed;
Deep dells, with fern and brake, and twisted thorn
Thick-matted, whence the hunter's shrill-ton'd horn
Started th' elastic deer, which, stung with fright,
Swift as the viewless winds, pursued their flight;
Loud torrents, rumbling as they won their course
Thro' fretted rocks and winding banks by force;
Or rills, that murmur'd music, as their race,
Thro' flowery vales, they ran with even pace.

When War's alarms no more around him rag'd,
In sports amid these scenes the Chief engaged;
Sports, that became his hardy form!—When Light
First 'gan to streak the flying mists of Night,
From his rough couch he sprung; his bugle blew,
And round him each impatient hunter drew;
Then forth the steed of wondrous swiftness came,
And thro' the woods he sought th' affrighted game;

From morn to eve, woods, plains, and vales and hills
With the loud echo of his voice he fills;
No toil fatigues him, and no danger stays;
Perils the zest of his amusement raise;
Then home to gorgeous halls and blazing fires,
Weary, yet pleas'd with exercise, retires.
The feast is spread; the war-clad walls along
Rings the glad converse, and rebounding song;
And when again the sable-mantled Night
Far o'er the sky has urg'd her heavy flight,
On the hard bed his giant limbs he throws,
And sinks serenely into deep repose!
O age of luxury! O days of ease!
The restless, vigorous, soul ye ne'er can please!
Within your stagnant lakes Corruption breeds,
And on your flowers vile sensual Meanness feeds!
As when foul pests have gather'd in the sky,
And o'er the globe the death-charg'd vapours fly,
Soon as the mighty Tempest drives his blasts,
And thro' the lurid gloom his lightning casts,
Vanish the congregated Brood of Ills,
And heath and sunshine all the landscape fills;
So, when wan Indolence, and timid Joy,
The native spirit of the mind destroy,
And fiends of Hell, and sprites of loathsome Pain,
Self-love, Lust, Gluttony, and Hate, enchain;
The toils of war, the battle's thundering storm
The sleepy current of the soul reform;
The loaded bosom purge, and bid it flame
With the pure throbbings of a generous fame;
And light with hope, and airy with the fire
Of blest Ambition, up to Heaven aspire!"*

* I had just finished this Essay, when I received the two following from a most valuable and respected Correspondent.

Art. DCCI.

N°. II. *On the effects of rural scenery.*

" These are thy glorious works, Parent of good!"

MILTON.

THE pride and vanity of man, in order to distinguish him from the inferior animals of the creation, instead of having recourse to that reason by which he alone was formed " after the image" and " in the likeness" of his Maker, has led him to imagine a thousand frivolous and trifling marks of difference. Hence one philosopher defines him to be a laughing, and another a weeping animal. One makes the chief criterion between him and brutes, to be, that he walks upon two legs and is not covered with feathers; and another, with an affectation of piety, that he walks upon two legs and looks up to heaven; " Os Hominis sublime dedit, cœlumque tueri jussit." One, that he is the most perfect of creatures; and another, that he is the most helpless. So that, in short, the most inconsiderable varieties of form and manners have served them as sufficient foundations on which to build the most important of all generic distinctions; although in reality a negro, from under the equator, differs more in mere external appearance from a Greenlander, or an inhabitant of Terra del Fuego, than either of them does from several other animals.

But though it may be very truly asserted, and few persons will now be disposed to contradict it, that the only real and certain difference between us and all other creatures, consists in the inestimable gift of reason; still this does not completely solve the

difficulty; for beasts also have some degree of understanding; and the wisest of men have never yet been able to explain the exact analogy which the internal faculties of the "half reasoning elephant," and the acute instinct of the dog, bear to our boasted understanding.

There is however one faculty of man, connected indeed with reason; but wholly independent of the exercise of its higher powers, which has, I believe, been entirely overlooked in all the various speculations upon this subject, and which yet seems to form a very marked ground of distinction between the human race and brutes. This is the delight occasioned to the mind by rural scenery; so that I would define man as an "animal capable of receiving pleasure from the beauties of Nature." Of this there is not the least ground for supposing that other creatures are at all susceptible. No horse, or dog, has ever been observed to stop to enjoy the view from a hill; to admire the rising or setting sun; or to choose to repose in a shady valley unless from the want of its shelter from the heat. A dog indeed will frisk in the snow, and, as Cowper says, will

"Shake his powder'd coat, and bark for joy:"

but he is never seen to admire the frozen fog which hangs on the tree, nor the glitter of the sunbeams on the icicle which is suspended from the roof; and the horse bounds over the verdant mead with as much pleasure in a dreary marsh as on the mountain's top.

But if this be greater, still perhaps it may be said

that this is an enjoyment not natural, but acquired, and therefore no distinction of man with respect to his genus; but either a natural taste in some individuals, or else dependent wholly upon the improvement of the mind. If this be so, my argument is certainly ill-founded, but I believe the very reverse to be the fact; I believe the most stupid and ignorant peasant receives as much temporary gratification by a view from a hill, or in a pleasant dale, as Gilpin himself ever did. Possibly indeed much more; for he has no power of frittering away his feelings by the exercise of his judgment in classing and analysing the objects before him, and thus finding a mountain too pointed, or a dale too circular, and its edges too strongly defined for picturesque beauty.

See the countryman upon a hill which commands what is commonly called a fine view. He opens his eyes, and stares around him with a grin of exquisite delight—"What a vast fine prospect here be! What a power of churches! and look, here's the river, and there's the wood! Sure 'tis a noble view, what a mort of miles one can see!" Place him in a deep valley, a Vaucluse if you will, and he exclaims, "What a vast pleasant place, so shady like, so green, and the water so clear! and then it is so lonesome—Why; a body may think here, without nobody's coming to interrupt him."

Now in both these cases who will venture to say that the rude and uninformed peasant does not feel as much delight as a Radcliffe, or a Charlotte Smith, would do in similar situations. True it is, that the artless and honest expressions of his feelings are

not clothed in the glowing colours of the one, or the natural yet elegant language of the other. But the internal sensation is the same, and the only difference is, that he has no power of imparting the pleasure he has experienced to others, in that exquisite manner which the two above-mentioned celebrated and rival ladies can.

I call them rivals, because they were both at the same time aspiring to fame by similar pursuits, though in writings composed in a very different style, and therefore not to be judged by the same rule. For the one is a novelist, but of the highest class, whose great merit is her delineation of character, and her views of life and manners, in which she is almost unequalled; while the works of the other are really romances as they are properly called; and the most striking circumstance which distinguishes them from other first-rate productions of the same kind, is the rich though sometimes gaudy colouring, which she throws over the vivid scenery that she so much delights to describe, and of which the imagery is such as belongs only to a warm country, and the most sublime objects of nature.

In Mrs. Radcliffe's works therefore the narrative is often of little use but to introduce the description to which it is subservient; in Mrs. Smith's, the description is only used to illustrate the story, and never forced into the service: it is always natural, and such as every reader of taste thinks he should feel himself in similar situations. Of this there are some striking instances in Ethelinde, in Desmond, and in the Old Manor House.

Although it may not be strictly pertinent to the

subject of this Essay, yet I cannot resist the temptation of saying a few words concerning this last unfortunate lady, whose sorrows and misfortunes are now closed by the hand of death. It has been objected to her, and perhaps not without some foundation, that she has not paid so much attention to morality and religion in her various publications, as she might have done; that she has not assisted her readers to draw the proper inferences from her characters, and the situations in which she has placed them; and therefore that the enjoyment of harmless pleasure, and some improvement of our mental faculties, are the only advantages to be derived from the perusal of her works. Admitting the fact, much may be said in her excuse; disappointed in and made wretched by the tenderest connection of human life, she was left to struggle for herself and family, against every species of treachery and oppression, that the chicanery of law, directed by bad hands, could exercise against her:

"The world was not her friend, nor the world's law."

She found no helping hand to rescue her from the grasp of poverty, and bid her freely exercise the powers of her genius without being dependent on them for bread. Ill educated (that is, with respect to the most important point of education) and worse married; neglected by this world, and never taught to look up with earnest, though "trembling hope" to another, it is no wonder that she did not inculcate more strongly principles of which she knew not the value. It is no small merit that neither in her language nor her sentiments she has strengthened bad ones; and in the only work which may be deemed of

a contrary tendency, the errors both moral and political seem to have proceeded from the head rather than from the heart. ‡*‡.

Art. DCCII.

N° III. *On the different taste of Virgil and Horace with respect to rural scenery.*

" Flumina amam, sylvasque inglorius." VIRG.

It has been observed long since, that no man can be a poet without being sensible of the charms of the country. " Scriptorum chorus omnis amat nemus, et fugit urbes;" that is, in theory: for in fact it is not absolutely the case. And the reason of this supposed preference is not so much on account of the undisturbed quiet of rural retirement, (for that may be had, as to all the purposes of writing and reflection, in Fleet Street as well as in Johnny Grote's house) but because the sublime and beautiful of nature so much assists, invigorates, and inspires a poetic imagination. To the moral and didactic Muse indeed " crowded cities" and " the busy hum of men" may be useful in furnishing materials; and for that reason, perhaps, among others, Johnson, Goldsmith, and many more, have preferred London to any retirement, however beautiful; but in the higher walks of poetry the tumult of a crowded city can only serve to confuse and derange the ideas. Amidst the " fumum et opes strepitumque Romæ," on what objects can the " fine frenzy" of a " poet's eye" delight to glance; with what views of nature can he assist his fancy?*

* " Huc rabiosa ruit canis, huc lutulenta ruit sus.
I nunc, et versus tecum meditare canoros." HOR.

Hence we find, that however poets may in other respects differ from each other, they all agree in celebrating the praises of the country. Even those who as men could hardly exist out of the atmosphere of Rome or London, as poets have not dared to avow a predilection so disgraceful and almost unnatural—almost impious indeed, if the strong and nervous expression of Cowper in his truly original style,

"God made the country, but man made the town,"*

could be understood in its literal sense.

But however poets may agree in this general principle, they vary greatly in the application of it, and in their preference of particular scenery are by no means guided by the same taste.

A remarkable instance of this (which as far as I know has not been noticed before) appears in the two most celebrated poets of the Augustan age, Virgil and Horace. Though born in different parts of Italy, Rome was their common centre, and though both of them speak in raptures of rural scenery and the magnificence of nature, they place the greatest perfection of it in countries very different from each other as well as distant. It is worthy of notice also, that each of them had travelled through the same parts, that is, all over Italy, Greece, and the intervening country, and neither of them fixes on his own natal soil. Virgil indeed was so partial to his, that he wishes there to enjoy his fame, and end his days. He was born near

* This however is the remark, and I believe the language, of Cowley.

Mantua, and he promises to build a temple on the lake through which the slow and reedy Mincius takes its wandering course.* He praises the fertility of the soil, and asserts that Italy is superior to the richest parts of Asia. But this assertion is made, not with regard to the beauties of its scenery, but the usefulness of its productions, and its freedom from noxious animals.

Not however that the elegant poet was insensible to the charms of Nature; for, in perhaps the most highly finished and admirable passage which all antiquity can furnish, he has given the reins to his fancy in the praise of the country and of a country life. But in this delicious and glowing description, it is observable that no part of the scenery which he apostrophizes by name belongs to his own country. It is all Grecian;† his fields, his mountains, his rivers, and his woods are all found in Thessaly, Laconia, and Thrace.

Horace is so far like Virgil, that neither does he derive his ideas of rural beauty from the country of which he was a native; but, unlike him in other respects, gives the palm to some parts of Italy over

* See Georg. II. v. 136, &c. and Georg. III. 13. The exactness of the poet's description is admirable. The Mincius slowly winding through a flat rich country forms a lake at Mantua; there he promises to build his temple, *propter aquam*, which ought to be rendered *near the lake;* a nicety passed over, I believe, by his commentators and translators.

† Georg. II. v. 486, et seq.

O ubi Campi
Sperchiusque, et virginibus Vacchata Lacænis
Taygeta! O qui me gelidis in vallibus Hæmi
Sistat, et ingenti ramorum protegat umbrâ!

all the rest of the world. In particular, he prefers it to the most admired scenery of Greece, even by name, in the strongest terms. In his ode to Plancus (Lib. I. Ode 7), he tells him that he shall leave to others the office of celebrating the beauties both of art and nature to be found in Greece; for that neither Laconia itself* (which country was expressly included in Virgil's praises) nor even the boasted vale of Tempe was equal in his estimation to the scenery round Tibur; in which neighbourhood his own villa was seated. Upon the same principle we find the poet earnestly wishing at another time (Lib. II. Ode 6) that he may pass the evening of his days at Tibur, and that if this prayer be denied him, he may be allowed to settle in the soft and genial climate of Tarentum, in the south-east of Italy.

This difference of opinion, or taste, in two poets, contemporaries and friends, is very striking. To which the Emperor gave his suffrage, who loved them both, and (I am sorry to add) was flattered by both, it would now be useless to inquire; but it is curious to observe in how different a light the same objects appear to minds of perhaps equal powers, of equally cultivated understandings, and having an equal taste for the enchanting scenery which abounds in both those countries.

Admirable indeed is the variety of the powers of

* *Tum patiens Lacedæmon* cannot refer to the *city*, because that could be no object of comparison with the groves and rivers of Tibur. Larissa was seated on the river Peneus, which also ran through the vale of Tempe; and, no doubt, is to be understood as referring to that valley which might well be compared to Tibur, though the *fertile Larissa* in the strict and literal sense could not.

Nature, and their influence on the minds of men and the different manner in which they affect different dispositions, so that what is to one a beauty, to another appears a deformity, is not one of the least instances of the bounty of Providence towards us. Extensive as their variety seems in combination, the works of Nature (like every thing that is truly great) are simple. Water, hill, plain, and wood, form all her materials; but these are subdivided, modelled, classed, and mixed together, in so many forms of beauty, as to prove to a well regulated mind one of the purest as well as highest sources of innocent intellectual pleasure. ‡*‡.

Art. DCCIII.

N°. IV. *On the state best adapted to human happiness.*

" Vitam quæ faciunt beatiorem,
Jucundissime Martialis, hæc sunt;
Res non parta labore, sed relicta;
Non ingratus ager; focus perennis;
Lis nunquam, toga rara; mens quieta;
Vires ingenuæ, salubre corpus;
Prudens simplicitas; pares amici;
Convictus facilis, sine arte mensa:
Nox non ebria, sed soluta curis;
Non tristis torus, attamen pudicus;
Somnus qui faciat breves tenebras;
Quod sis, esse velis, nihilque malis;
Summum nec metuas diem, nec optes."

MARTIAL x. 47.

Translation by Cowley.

" Since, dearest friend, 'tis your desire to see
A true receipt of happiness from me;

These are the chief ingredients, if not all:
Take an estate neither too great, nor small,
Which *quantum sufficit* the doctors call.
Let this estate from parents' care descend;
The getting it too much of life does spend.
Take such a ground, whose gratitude may be
A fair encouragement for industrie;
Let constant fires the Winter's fury tame;
And let thy kitchen be a vestal flame.
Thee to the town let never suit at law,
And rarely, very rarely, business draw.
Thy active mind in equal temper keep,
In undisturbed peace, yet not in sleep.
Let exercise a vigorous health maintain,
Without which all the composition's vain.
In the same weight prudence and innocence take,
And of each does the just mixture make.
But a few friendships wear, and let them be
By nature and by fortune fit for thee.
Instead of art and luxury in food,
Let mirth and freedom make thy table good;
If any cares into the day time creep,
At night, without wine's opium, let them sleep.
Let rest, which Nature does to darkness wed,
And not lust, recommend to thee thy bed;
Be satisfied, and pleased, with what thou art;
Act chearfully and well the allotted part;
Enjoy the present hour, be thankful for the past,
And neither fear, nor wish the approaches of the last."

I have often and deeply reflected how far this state of existence is in right of itself capable of happiness; and what are the circumstances which afford the best chance of attaining it; and I am

firmly convinced that the description given by Martial of the ingredients most conducive to it, is founded not merely in the dreams of a poet's fancy, but in solid and unalterable truth.

The great difficulty is the concurrence of the ingredient, which is least likely to be combined with the rest, but without which all the rest are vain:

"Quod sis, esse velis; nihilque malis."

Unless a man knows how to value such a lot; unless he is thoroughly aware of the emptiness or the perplexities of wealth, and grandeur, and rank, and power; as long as he is dazzled by show, or sighs after distinction, the moderate pleasures within his reach will appear insipid and dull.

To see so large a portion of mankind pass by, unheeded, the very exquisite enjoyments, which offer themselves to their embrace, in pursuit of the most delusive phantoms, which they are seeking at the expence of ease, virtue, health, fortune, and reputation, is indeed amongst the most deplorable proofs of our fallen nature. To rise of a morning with a head unburthened with perplexing business, and a heart unclouded with care; to behold, as the sun pierces through the mistiness of the dawn, the scenes of nature opening before us in dewy brilliance; to be at liberty to wander uncontrouled amid this beautiful landscape, and, while exercise strengthens and braces the body, to inhale freshness and exquisite odours, and exhilarating spirits from the pure airs of heaven, is not mere negative happiness, but rapture and enchantment! From hence to return home, even to a straw-roofed cot-

tage, where there is neatness, and competence, and peace, and a book, and a virtuous friend, of a cultivated mind, to meet one, is only a variety, and not a diminution, of the day's pleasure. The sacred charm of innocence, instead of leaving the sting of regret in the recollection of the past, adds, on reflection, to the poignancy of the enjoyment; and the corporeal frame, healthy from its own habits, and untouched by mental uneasiness, becomes attuned to sensations of happiness, such as almost lift it above humanity!

I am as sure, as I am of any human truth, that grandeur and ambition, at the very moment of attaining their utmost wishes, never felt pleasures, which, even in a worldly point of view, could bear a comparison with these cheap and innocent occupations! Occupations, in the power of thousands, and tens of thousands, who desert them for the paths of bitterness, disappointment, disgrace, crime, and eternal misery!

But, alas! the rarest of all earthly attainments is content! It seems to be one of the most radical defects of our frail nature. We cannot bear to see our neighbours mounted over our heads; we cannot bear to see bloated Greatness look down upon us with neglect and scorn; when we ought to consider the robe of office that covers the insignificant, and the coronet which encircles the brows of the weak, as nothing more than the fool's cloak and cap, which point him out more distinctly to the contempt of the world. It must be confessed, indeed, that there are times, when the best regulated minds cannot entirely restrain their indignation on this subject.

Never perhaps did the period exist in this country, when these abuses were carried so far, as they have lately been. Upstarts of the most offensive sort have been obtruded into too many high offices, and decked out with too many unmerited distinctions, which have enabled them to insult men, their superiors as well in all the gifts of nature, as in all those artificial claims which have hitherto been recognized by the wisdom of human institutions. These men, even where they have been blessed with native genius, have uniformly been inebriated with the fumes of sudden prosperity, and belied the honourable expectations, which they had raised. In truth, they are so engrossed with themselves, that they have no conception of any pretensions but their own. But these circumstances, though they may palliate, can by no means justify, the disturbance of that peace of mind, which becomes true wisdom, and true virtue!

There is, however, a species of celebrity, which it is not unbecoming a well-attempered disposition to seek. I mean the fame, which is merited by eminence in literature; more especially by the sublime efforts of poetry. This pursuit is not inconsistent with that station and those habits which Martial describes as affording the best probability of happiness here; but, on the contrary, would be most cherished by them. Anxieties never cease to embitter the pillow of Greatness; a large retinue, a crowd of dependents, surround it with intrigues and troubles; calumny, envy, and malice are constantly at work; luxury enfeebles the constitution; idleness weakens the mind; and while all in this world ap-

pears but the vanity of vanities, the hopes of the next grow fainter and fainter, for the sake of delusions, from which the unhappy victim is yet too feeble to extricate himself.

O how I sigh for the enviable state, so beautifully delineated by the poet; and in the first place

"Lis nunquam, toga rara, mens quieta;"

that *toga*, from which I turn with such unfeigned abhorrence; which covers a heart, so restless, so feverish, so artificial; and is surmounted by a head so full of quips, and quirks, and sophistry; and so occupied in grovelling labours, when it might aspire to speculations which would exalt it in the ranks of intellectual existence! To behold a crowd of lawyers, in a narrow and heated court, breathing pestilence and poison, with wan looks, sallow cheeks, and distracted countenances, insisting with artificial energy on some technical nonsense, subversive of wisdom, justice, and equity, is a spectacle, from which I early fled with unconquerable disgust. What wise man would for a moment exchange for it the lot of the poor and uncultivated ploughman, whom I have heard, in the exuberance of his heart-felt joy, make the echoes rebound with his voice, as I have seen him, in a cold drizzling morning of December, striking his furrow in distant fields, far amid solitary woodlands, and remote from all that is deemed the gaiety of life!

The heart, that has lost its zest for the scenery of Nature, that is untouched by the simplest pleasures, however harsh the designation may seem, is depraved! A walk, a ride, in the open air, at a distance from towns, and a return to the most un-

ostentatious cottage, where only competence, and cleanliness, and peace preside, offers to a virtuous bosom the utmost gratification, of which we are capable, except what may arise from the retrospect of a duty performed, or a benefit conferred.

If these sentiments are faintly, or imperfectly expressed, the reader is entreated to notice, that they have been dictated from the couch of debility and sickness.

Feb. 9, 1807.

Art. DCCIV.

N°. V. *Literature the only permanent vehicle of Fame.*

" ——Ignotique longa
Nocte, carent quia vate sacro." Hor.

Feb. 14, 1807.

I have often been struck at the extreme indifference and ignorance of men, who appear to be acting a conspicuous part in the world, in every thing except that which concerns their own immediate line of action. Men, of whom better things might have been expected, have been so engrossed with their own peculiar views of private ambition, that they have been found totally uninformed in matters, which it behoves every liberal mind to be in some degree acquainted with.

The late Mr. Pitt, whose exalted character I contemplate with due reverence, had defects of which his various splendid qualities ought not to obliterate the disapprobation. He seems to have imagined that the temper of the public mind might be, not only best, but exclusively, influenced through the channel of parliamentary oratory. A more narrow

and dangerous mistake has seldom been entertained. With all proper respect for the powers of oral eloquence, it is impossible to contemplate its deficiencies, compared with written compositions, (more especially as conveyed to the public by means of hired reporters of debates,) without astonishment at the error of such an opinion entertained by a strong understanding!

Alas! his own fame is now suffering through the consequences of this mistake! He did not know the value of literature; and he never drew its masters around him.* His reputation therefore begins to be eclipsed, in the eye of the nation, by that of the great rival, who soon followed him to the grave; and who, having adorned his brilliant talents with this kind of cultivation, now enjoys the effect of it in the adulation paid to his memory.

In truth, in what other way can the credit now given to Mr. Fox, for superiority in certain points, as a statesman, to which he has no fair pretension, be accounted for? The panegyrists of that illustrious senator seem to take for granted, that because the measures of Mr. Pitt failed to rescue the Continent of Europe from the grasp of France, the opinions and predictions of his opponent have been verified by time, and would have produced both the preservation of the nations which have fallen, and the peace and security and prosperity of Great Britain! An illegitimate inference, which were the friends of the departed premier as zealous and as active in the fair means of regulating the public sentiment,

* A sensible pamphlet on this subject was published about ten years ago by "A Near Observer."

as they ought to be, would have been long ago exposed! I conceive, on the contrary, no mathematical demonstration more certain, than that, whatever may be the event of the present struggle, if we had merely stood upon the defensive, nursed our resources, cultivated our commerce, and hugged the blessings of peace in a delusive safety, till we were attacked, while France was cherishing her strength, her ferocity, and her skill in arms, by the difficulties and dangers of warfare, our fate would have been, on the first onset, to have fallen in all the debility of ease, wealth, and luxury, even without a blow. So much for the wise opinions, which have lately obtained uncontradicted applause for Mr. Fox, who, if he had put the principles, which he promulgated when in opposition, into execution on the attainment of power, (a folly of which I do not for a moment suspect him,) would have brought this country to irreparable ruin!

But such is the predominance, and in many respects the merited predominance, of him, who has courted the favour of the muses!

"Vixere fortes ante Agamemnona
Multi: sed omnes illachrymabiles
Urgentur, ignotique longâ
Nocte, carent quia vate sacro.
Paulum sepultæ distat inertiæ
Celata virtus: non ego te meis
Chartis inornatum silebo,
Totve tuos patiar labores
Impune, Lolli, carpere lividas
Obliviones."*

* Hor. Od. 9. Lib. iv.

That they, who adored the son of Chatham when living, would desert his memory when dead, ought to have been within his contemplation, if he had exercised his sagacity on the characters of those, whom for the most part he suffered to surround him.

———" He rests among the dead!
The swarm, that in thy noon-tide beam were born,
Gone to salute the rising morn!"

For me, who never received favour or notice from him, when alive, and who am precluded from any effectual co-operation in the principles by which he was actuated, from the coldness and strange indifference of those who have assumed the name of his surviving friends, I will not lightly be driven from the office of strewing his grave with flowers!

Yet how ungrateful a task I perform, how little I have been " fed with the fostering dew of praise," it would seem querulous to detail. But I will not be deterred from recording the following two Sonnets, which a late occasion drew forth.

SONNET I.

Composed at midnight, Feb. 11, 1807.

Amid these sylvan shades I live unknown
To the coarse spirit, who with public brawls
Shakes in false fury Senatorial walls;
And, vainly claiming to himself alone
All worth, importance, talent, and renown,
Deems him, who, list'ning to the Muse's calls,
Spends his calm life in distant rural halls,
A cypher, whom his rolls of Fame disown!

Poor narrow-minded, grovelling, base-soul'd knave!
When all the frothy torrents of thy tongue

Sink, like thyself, forgotten in the grave,
Still fresh shall flourish what the Bard has sung;
And future Wisdom shall record his praise;
And unborn Beauty tremble o'er his lays!

SONNET II.

Written Feb. 12, 1807.

Tho' in my veins the blood of monarchs flow,
Plantagenet and Tudor! * not for these
With empty boasts my lifted mind I please;
But rather that my heart's emotions glow
With the pure flame, the Muse's gifts bestow;
Nor would it my aspiring soul appease,
In rank, birth, wealth, to loll at sensual ease;
And none but Folly's stupid flattery know!
But yet when upstart Greatness turns an eye
Of scorn and insult on my modest fame,
And on descent's pretensions vain would try
To build the honours of a nobler name;
With pride defensive swelling, I exclaim,
"Base one, e'en there with *me* thou dar'st not vie!"

ART. DCCV.

N°. VI. *Scott's Lay.*

TO THE RUMINATOR.

"Of ancient deeds so long forgot,
Of feuds, whose Memory was not."

SCOTT'S LAY.

SIR,

UPON reading the poem called "The Lay of the Last Minstrel," a few observations have suggested

* This is a fact, which may easily be ascertained by obvious authorities, of which it is unnecessary to mention any other than Sandford, or Stebbing. The sentiments are exactly those, which the author feels, and has ever felt, on the subject of descent. He would never oppose it but to those who assume airs on that pretence.

themselves to me, which, if they fall within the compass of your plan, are at your service.

Although this delightful work does not rise to the sublime heights of epic poetry, yet it is never disgraced by the absurdities which are to be met with in most of those which affect that name. Even Homer himself, to whom nothing has appeared as yet aut simile aut secundum, has puerilities which are only to be excused, as Horace says, by supposing him sometimes to nod. Virgil, more equal throughout, is less sublime; but was so blind an idolater of his great master that, notwithstanding the judgment for which all ages have given him credit, he even copied some of his most glaring faults. Every schoolboy can point out the bombast and feebleness of Lucan, Statius, and Silius Italicus, notwithstanding the fine and even sublime passages which are to be found in them all, especially in the first.

Of the modern Italian poets, Boiardo and Ariosto were writers of romance in verse, and as such, however engaging, are hardly subject to the rules of criticism. Tasso's Gierusalemme Liberata is more regular, and has many beautiful and affecting passages, but seldom rises to sublimity. The same may be said of the Portuguese Camoens, whose subject indeed is less generally interesting than the others'. Voltaire's Henriade is more approved by the judgment than the fancy. It is coldly correct, and though it cannot be denied to have beauties, few persons are tempted to search for them a second time.

In our own country the attempts in this difficult line of writing have not been fortunate, always excepted the noble poem of Milton, which shines,

among all which have appeared since Homer, velut inter ignes Luna minores. Yet it is far from being free from defects, both in the design and execution of it; and like Homer, aliquando dormitat. Cowley failed both in his choice of a subject, and in his manner of treating it.* To have read Blackmore requires more patience and perseverance than I am master of. Spenser's justly celebrated Fairy Queen, with infinite detached beauties, is merely an allegorical romance, and can hardly be considered as a whole. Leonidas, and the Epigoniad, proximus sed longo proximus intervallo, are now but little known and seldom read: a sure proof of want of interest and merit.† So that a perfect epic poem is still and probably always will be, a desideratum in that fascinating art.

Now the work which gave rise to these desultory observations, though it does not arrogate to itself that lofty name, has perhaps as good a claim to it as many that have had more presumption. As the author however has not thought proper so to call it,

* Subjects taken from Scripture have always failed in the execution; witness the Davideis, Mrs. Rowe's Joseph, Duck's Shunammite, Cumberland's Calvary, and many others. The venerable and interesting simplicity of the narrative must be lost. Any thing taken from it leaves the story imperfect; any thing added to it disgusts, and almost shocks us as impious. As Omar said of the Alexandrine Library, we may say of such writings, if they contain only what is in the Scriptures, they are superfluous; if what is not in them they are false.

† The epic poems of Southey, Pye, Hole, and others, are purposely omitted, as they are fresh in the minds of the public, which has properly appreciated their merit. O that poets would recollect that not to excel is to fail! This does not apply to Joan of Arc, or to Madoc.

I have no right to name it for him, but shall proceed to point out some of its most striking beauties and defects.

Nothing can be more engaging than the introduction and close of every book; and no reader, I believe, would wish these to be either shortened or altered. Both the thoughts and the versification are equally fine; and the art of the old bard in his applications of the narrative to his hearers is very pleasing and well imagined. The hero of the story itself appears to be Sir William of Deloraine, though he acts only a subordinate part in the conduct of it; and this perhaps may be deemed a fault; * but some amends for it are made by the exquisite delineation of his character, and the admirable manner in which it is supported throughout. He is precisely the Ferrau of Italian and French romance, excepting in the brutality of that giant; for the Scotch marauder could mourn over a fallen enemy; and though he

> " Harried the lands of Richard Musgrave,
> And slew his brother by dint of glaive,"

he lamented the death of an honourable foe, and would have given his lands to have redeemed his life. The whole of his character is pourtrayed with a masterly hand, and the contrast between him and Cranstoun, the exact counterpart of the gallant and courtly knight of Charlemagne, or the Round Table, is drawn with great skill. When they en-

* It is however such a fault as is imputed to Milton, who in the opinion of many able critics has erred in making Satan his hero, instead of Adam.

gage, the one thinks of his mistress, and ejaculates a prayer; the other has no mistress, and knows no prayer; * but,

"He stoop'd his head and he couch'd his lance,"

as the only preparations necessary for the combat.

The most interesting and highly-wrought passage of the whole poem is Deloraine's journey to Melrose Abbey and the visit to Michael Scott's tomb there. The whole description of the abbey, of the wizard himself, (who seems to exist in a state somewhat similar to that of the Vampyres in Hungary,) and of Deloraine's aged conductor, is superior to any thing of the kind that has appeared in modern poems, and perhaps would not lose by a comparison with many of those which are most esteemed among the ancients. It forms several separate pictures adorned with the most vivid and brilliant colouring; and they are so put together as to form a well-blended whole, in which all the parts unite, and without any one of which it would be incomplete.

Thus, for instance, their progress through the cloisters, where

"The pillared arches were over his head,
And under his feet were the bones of the dead,"

however common the fact may be to every ancient church, shews the author to have possessed a truly poetic genius; of which one great part is the being

* His ignorance, who could not read, and knew no prayer
"Save to patter an Ave Mary,"
reminds me of one of the Montmorencis (I think Anne the Constable) who used to make his mark only; "attendu," says Brantomé, "quil ne scavoit ni lire ni ecrire."

enabled to seize upon striking and affecting images, drawn from common occurrences or objects that may be seen every day, and yet are passed unnoticed by vulgar minds.

The beauties of this poem are to be seen in almost every page, while its faults, (for it is not wholly exempt from defects,) are thinly scattered over the surface, rari nantes in gurgite vasto, neither glaring nor offensive. It is the part of just criticism however, though its least pleasing office, to notice them as well as its excellencies. The most important of them relates to the machinery; and here a violation of the well-known rule of Horace, Nec Deus intersit, &c. is but too apparent. The dialogue overheard by the *Grammered* Countess between the two river Sprites, concerning Margaret's marriage, is needless, because the information might have been conveyed both to her and the reader by more obvious means; and it is unpoetical, because it is a violent use of supernatural assistance (not to be resorted to without necessity,) and even such as, I believe, forms no part of the local superstition of the Lowlands.

In the tragedy of Douglas, Home, in his fine description of the storm, introduces a similar supernatural Being to heighten the horrors of it.

> "And loud and shrill
> The angry Spirit of the water shriek'd."

But I doubt whether there be any authority for supposing that the river Spirits meddle in the domestic concerns of the mansions on their banks, or meet to gossip about the intermarriages of the

families which inhabit them. And the same learning that enabled the Countess to interpret their conversation, would have assisted her also to gain the requisite information without their help.

But the machinery of the greatest length, as well as consequence, is that of the magic book. This is so well described; its consequences are so striking and wonderful; the purport of it is concealed beneath a veil so thick, and its mystic contents are so darkly alluded to, and still left in that state of unexplained horror which so powerfully affects the mind, that few readers of taste will be inclined to object to the introduction of it. Yet it has been observed that it is not of use towards the conduct of the story, adequate to the eagerness of the Countess to possess it. And so far as to the furtherance of her schemes only, this is true; for the effect it produces is directly contrary to what she wished. But that magic art should deceive its votaries is very consonant to poetical justice; and it was only by the agency of the book that the catastrophe of the narrative, viz. the marriage of Cranstoun and Margaret, is produced. For it was through the power of the book that the "young Heir of Branksome" was stolen, and that Cranstoun was enabled to personate Deloraine, conquer Musgrave, and redeem the boy; which was the only way of inducing the Countess to consent to the marriage.

And here it ought to be pointed out, with respect to the moral conduct of the piece, how ingeniously it is contrived that the violent passions of the Countess, which led her to have recourse to those dark arts, which must not even be named, and for

which the monk was to do a treble penance for having only "thought them his heart within," had the unlooked-for effect of completely defeating her own purposses.

In this respect therefore here was dignus vindice nodus for the use of machinery; no common means, no human persuasions could have induced her to consent to resign her hatred to the family of Cranstoun. The end of the drama could not have been attained but by the aid of magic.

The conduct of the dwarf, which has also been objected to, is to be defended upon the same principle. The *book* without him would have been useless; and he, though far from intending it, was a principal agent in conducting the poem to its destined conclusion. The dark obscurity in which his story is involved, both when he was *lost* and *found*, is highly poetical, and affords a delightful scope for the imagination.

As a minor blemish it may be observed, that the character of Margaret is not sufficiently prominent to excite much interest. There is nothing to distinguish it from any other; and therefore to most readers the recovery of the "young Heir" will seem an event of more consequence than her marriage.

It has also been mentioned as a fault, that there are no similies throughout the poem; but whether that can be so deemed, in a work which lays claim to no higher rank than that of a minstrel's Song is, I think, at least doubtful. If the objection be well founded, it is one which only the judgment makes on reflection; and which the imagination, warmed with the beauty of the piece, and deeply engaged by the attention which it excites, can hardly stop to discover.

But there is another light in which this work has a claim to be considered, which is that of a narrative, meant to exemplify the curious system of Border manners. In this respect it is unrivalled: no history has yet appeared which gives so just an account, so interesting a picture of the lawless ravages of the Borders, which were equally a disgrace to both nations. With regard to these the romance has the singular advantage of being a true history as to the general facts, and the usual conduct of the Moss Troopers; and the characters of the two English leaders, Howard* and Dacre, are admirably discriminated, and evidently drawn from the most authentic sources of information. ‡*‡

Art. DCCVI.

N°. VII. *On the proper objects of Biography.*

" Nec ea solum in claris et honoratis viris, sed in vita etiam privata, et quiete." Cic. de Senect.

It is a palpable, but a very common, error, that lives of activity and adventure only can afford proper materials for biography. " What interest," it is asked, " can the Memoirs of ** **** exhibit? That person passed through the world, in peace, leisure, and retirement, without encountering any extraordinary events!" " Is it possible," I answer,

* Of the singular character of Lord William Howard there are some curious traits recorded by Gilpin in his tour to the Lakes. There is a history of the Borders, by Ridpath, in 4to. and an account of the " Ancient State of the Borders" in Burn and Nicolson's Hist. of Westmorland and Cumberland; but a more complete account of them would be very acceptable to the lovers of history, and there are abundant materials for that purpose.

" that this remark can be made on a character of transcendent talent, erudition, and virtue; whose writings have illuminated more than half a century, and whose labours in the closet were calculated to produce effects a thousand times more extensive, than all the busy results of the most practical industry?"

Pictures of the mind, delineations of the movements of the heart, the records of the private and undisguised opinions of those, who have been distinguished for their intellectual endowments, are the ingredients which a cultivated reader most values in personal history. " Hair-breadth escapes, and perilous accidents by sea and land," are calculated principally to interest a vulgar curiosity. The relation of the ramble of a man of genius in a field of daisies, or along banks scented with the early primrose, if it describes his sensations, or any of the visions that floated across his fancy, is more affecting and more instructive, than the account of the most surprising actions, in which a man of a common understanding has been engaged.

If these observations are just, the memoir of one, whose life has been employed in exercising and improving the best faculties of the soul, is of all others, when properly executed, the most attractive, and the most important; even though it should have been spent in the most unvaried solitude, or the most equable course of outward circumstances. We are anxious to know the confidential thoughts of those, on whom Nature has bestowed the power of deeper insight into human affairs, on those points of our existence which come most home to our

bosoms, and on which every reflecting mind must occasionally ruminate. Sometimes perhaps we are pleased to find in them weaknesses congenial with our own; and we are consoled with this sympathy, which makes us appear less despicable to ourselves.

The great characteristic of persons of genius seems to be, not that they feel differently from others, but that they feel more acutely, and with more distinctness, and are capable therefore of clearly and forcibly delineating what they feel. Thus the sentiments contained in Gray's Elegy, "find," as Johnson says, "an echo in every bosom;" they are instantly acknowledged to be such, as its readers have continually experienced; but which they could not before analyse, or perceive with sufficient vividness to be expressed by them. When the picture is thus brought before them, they are surprised that they never produced such an one themselves; and, while they admit its truth, think they hereafter could paint like it with the greatest facility. We hear much, among the critics, about INVENTION as the first characteristic of poetry: but is not this INVENTION?

Endued as they are with powers of this kind, we peruse with eagerness all the private letters, the careless sketches, and retired and unambitious memorials of those, who have been thus distinguished for mental superiority. We delight to see the fleeting visions of the head, or the heart, embodied in language; and fixed before us for leisurely contemplation. What avails the opportunity of having seen "many men and many cities," unless the tra-

veller, like Ulysses, has the talent to make observations and profit by the experience! What signifies, to have beheld all the sublime scenery of Salvator Rosa, unless he, who has viewed it, has the pencil able to paint, or the pen to describe it! Bloomfield, in the early confinement to a poor village in the most flat and unpicturesque part of Suffolk,* could produce descriptions full of a combination of images so brilliant, and so touching, as he, who has been all his life familiar with the richest scenes of Nature, can never, with inferior gifts, produce by any effort!

The mind is surely the scene of action, which we are most interested in studying. When we compare its capacities with those of material power; when we know that in one minute it can perform journies and gain victories, which it would consume the whole lives of the most active travellers, and the most able generals to execute, what more copious, what more important theme for delineation can we require? It is this consideration which elevates the study of ethics among the first in the scale of human knowledge; and as long as intellect is superior to matter, it must be classed in the highest rank of philosophy. Its nice and evanescent colours, which, seeming to leave much to conjecture, give to dull faculties an opportunity to call it shadowy and unsubstantial, are the very characteristics, which stamp its value.

Never then let it be said, that the life of a person of genius affords no materials for biography, be-

* See a most interesting volume of Scenery, illustrative of Bloomfield's poems, published by Mr. Brayley.

cause it was passed in retirement and inaction. If there remain records of his mental occupations, if his opinions, his feelings, and the rainbow-like colours of his fancy can be remembered, and properly told, they will contribute essentially to the best and most interesting department of human intelligence.

March 21, 1807.

Art. DCCVII.

N°. VIII. *On Rowley and Ossian.*

" Amovitque sinus, et gentes maluit ortus Mirari, quam nosse, tuos." LUCAN.

TO THE RUMINATOR.

Sir,

In this age of critical inquiry; of patient, accurate, and laborious investigation: it might be supposed that no author would be so hardy as to attempt to deceive the world; it might be thought that no literary imposture could be so well carried on, as to escape discovery from the lynx-like eyes of the wise and learned, or the acute discernment of the readers of the works of other times. Yet in point of fact, this does not appear to be the case; deceits of this kind are often attempted, and not always, at least satisfactorily, discovered. Though that ingenious young gentleman, Master Ireland, made a full confession (but not till it was too late) and even had the hardiness to "glory in his shame," the fountains of other works of much greater merit are still as much concealed as those of the Nile; and other authors, translators, or editors of much higher genius and pretensions have quietly stolen out of

the world (or like poor misguided Chatterton indignantly* rushed out of it), leaving posterity to settle the matter among themselves, and assign them their proper place at their leisure.

This however has not always been done in a manner perfectly convincing. Attempts have lately been made to shew that even the forgeries of Lauder were not wholly without foundation. There are still persons who are not entirely convinced that the youth of Chatterton was able to produce those noble poems, which he chose to ascribe to the maturer age of Rowley; and there are many more, who find it difficult to believe that Macpherson was the sole author of the poems published under the name of Ossian.†

Concerning these last, the investigation seems not to have been very fairly and impartially conducted. On the one hand, there was great national, and perhaps personal, pride, which would not deign to give such information as the public had a right to expect; on the other, a captious unwillingness to give way to pretensions to such remote antiquity, which must of course be very little capable of being supported by external proof.

It seems to be allowed by all, that the Erse, as it is commonly called, has not been a written language till within, comparatively, a very few years; and it is contended, that the changes which take place in

* Vitaque cum gemitu fugit indignata sub umbras.
Virg. L. XII. 952.

† I have not read the report of the Committee of the Highland Society upon this subject, nor have learnt what has been the result of their inquiries.

language, and the well-known inaccuracy of oral tradition, must have prevented such long and regular poems as Temora and Fingal, from being thus handed down during so many centuries. But to this it may be replied that, in a country so remote as the Highlands of Scotland, and so little visited by strangers as they were during the dark ages, their language, like their local superstitions, probably remained nearly the same. And with respect to tradition, in countries where there are no written records, it is more likely to be preserved in tolerable purity and correctness than where there are. It may also be urged, that till the time when they were collected by Pisistratus, even the works of Homer were recited only in detached parts; and the acts of Diomede, the parting of Hector and Andromache, the death of Patroclus, &c. &c. were known by the people in general, only as so many detached ballads, or *rhapsodies*, and not as parts of the noblest whole ever produced by human genius. The art of book-making does not then seem to have been known; and there is no reason to suppose that after the parts had been arranged in their proper order, any doubts arose in Athens as to the genuineness of the work. Yet even then the history of the author was so obscure, that it could not be determined whether he was born in Asia or Europe, in one of the Grecian islands or on the Continent; and it is thought doubtful at this day, by very eminent scholars, as it was also in different periods of antiquity, whether the whole subject of his narrative be or be not fabulous, and whether, if founded on truth, the event was as he has represented it.

This seems therefore to be an argument on which Dr. Johnson, and other writers on that side of the question, have dwelt too strongly. The prejudices of that distinguished scholar certainly operated upon this, as well as many other occasions, and his Tour in Scotland did not tend to lessen them. . He had no taste for the rude, wild, and naked scenery of the Western Isles, and the absence of written documents seemed to him convincing proof against the alleged antiquity of the lays of Ossian; and he refused to receive the testimony of those inhabitants who were most competent to give it, because he chose illiberally to fancy that they would prefer the credit of their country to truth. Yet I have been told, by a lady, now deceased, of high literary reputation, that the late Sir James Macdonald, elder brother of the Chief Baron, assured her, that he could repeat, when a lad, many of the poems translated by Macpherson in their original Erse. A similar assurance I received also myself from a surgeon in the navy, a native of the isle of Mull, who told me not only that he could repeat many of those poems, but that Macpherson had not selected, or perhaps met with, some of the finest of them; in particular one which is a dialogue between Ossian and a missionary, who was preaching the Christian religion in the Highlands, which he said was the noblest poem he had ever known.*

* Possibly this may be the poem mentioned by Miss Owenson in her novel of "The Wild Irish Girl;" and the missionary prove to be St. Patrick. It must be owned that there is a great weight in that lady's arguments to prove that Ossian was a native of Ireland, and that Morven is to be found in that country.

When I was in Scotland, about fourteen years since, I was in the boat of a highland fisherman, upon Loch Lomond, who appeared so intelligent that I was induced to ask him some questions upon this subject. He told me that he could sing a great many of the songs of Ossian, but added, that they were old fashioned things, and he would sing me a modern Erse song upon the present Duke of Montrose's patriotism in being the means of restoring to them the ancient highland dress. He said that he had never heard that the poems of Ossian had been translated into English, and seemed much surprised that I should know any thing about them.

With respect to the internal evidence which these celebrated poems afford, neither party seem to have considered it with sufficient accuracy. Young persons are struck with the wild and romantic splendour of the imagery, with the bravery of the heroes, and the beauty of the women. Those of a more advanced age are tired with the perpetual recurrence of the same images: Bran bounding over the heath, the gray rock, the thin and shadowy forms of departed Valour appearing in a cloud, and even the white arms and bosoms of female loveliness, are so little varied and so generally prominent, that neither the young nor the old are tempted to penetrate deeper than the language, to discover the real merits of the composition. If they did, a discrimination of character, a strength of colouring, even a variety of incident might be observed, which escape the notice of inattentive readers. In proof of this, let the affecting intercourse of Ossian and Malvina, of which there is no parallel in any ancient writer,

be observed; let the nervous and original character of Oscar, and the striking circumstances of his death, be considered.* Add to these the contrast between the generous Cairbar and his ferocious brother, and that between the two Irish warriors Foldath and Malthos, both in the field and council; the beautiful episode of Sulmalla; the awful introduction of the venerable and unconquered Fingal to the war (though that seems less original than most other parts of the poems), and the distinction between the characters of his sons, as well as of the manner of their deaths.

If these poems be impartially considered therefore, with no reference to the beauty or singularity of the language, surely it will hardly be supposed that the whole of them can be due to Macpherson's invention; or indeed, that he, or any well-educated man, could so totally unlearn all his classical acquirements, as to produce a work betraying so little, if any, imitation of those great *exemplaria Græca*, with which the mind of every scholar must be filled. Probably in this, as in most things, the truth may lie in the middle. He found these songs *volitantes per ora virum*, defective and imperfect. He supplied those parts which were wanting, added, omitted, and filled up as he thought necessary, and has thus given a work to the world, of the merit of which no greater proof can be required, than that it has been translated into every modern language, and is admired and beautiful in them all.

I am, Sir, &c. &c. †*†.

* What reader of taste and feeling but must shudder when red-haired Olla raises the song of death on the distant heath!

Art. DCCVIII.

N°. IX. *On the Belief of Supernatural Beings.*

" Nec me solum ratio, ac disputatio impulit ut ita crederem; sed nobilitas etiam summorum philosophorum et auctoritas." Cic. de Senect.

TO THE RUMINATOR.

Sir,

In the course of your deep speculations on men and things; in the varied reflections of a poetic as well as philosophic mind, you must sometimes probably have thought on what will be, as well as on that which has been. Some of your *ruminations* no doubt have turned on subjects of higher and more lasting importance than political, and, of course, temporary concerns; than the far more engaging pursuits of philosophy, or even of that divine art, which, beyond all others, ensures the immortality of this world.*

Speculations of this nature have indeed engaged the attention of the wise and learned in every age; and, perhaps, in exact proportion to the excellency of those mental faculties, by which they felt a consciousness of excelling the brute creation, attended by an inward assurance that it was therefore improbable that they should cease, like them, to exist. Hence (not to allude at all to the inestimable advantages of that Revelation which " has brought life

* Witness the assertion of Horace, that his fame would last as long as the Vestal Virgin should offer sacrifice on the Capitol. The Pagan Priest, the Vestal Virgin have served for centuries, only

" To point a moral or adorn a tale,"

and the Capitol itself, the residence of the contemptible representative of the Conscript Fathers, the *Senator of Rome*, " stat magni nominis umbra;" but the poet's lays still survive and shine with undiminished splendour, after the lapse of eighteen hundred years.

and immortality to light" through the gospel) the most interesting inquiries of those who have thought deeply and abstrusely, have been directed to the nature of that future state, of which almost every sage, in every period of the world, has asserted the probability, if not the certainty.

For this reason, perhaps, it is, that in all ages the belief of supernatural beings, or appearances, seems to have prevailed; the persuasion of something, neither defined nor understood, forming, as it were, a link, a connexion, or bond of union, between this world and the next.* Modern philosophers, indeed, cut the gordian knot at once, by denying the truth of every relation that tends to establish such belief; without deigning to inquire or scrutinize, they assume the impossibility of them as an incontrovertible axiom, and scorn to use any other argument but that powerful, though somewhat uncivil one, *ad stultitiam*. The ancients did not so; but they, perhaps, erred as much on the other side, by receiving indifferently, as true, all sorts of idle stories, however improbable or ill supported.

I was led into these reflections by reading an account of the most ancient apparition mentioned either in history or poetry, which is told in these words: "When deep sleep falleth upon men, fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake. Then a spirit passed before my

* If it be said that this idea loses ground in proportion to the spreading of civilization, still it keeps pace exactly with religion; a lukewarmness, or indifference towards which, is also found unfortunately to increase as soon as civilization degenerates into luxury, towards which it makes a continual and sometimes rapid progress.

face, the hair of my flesh stood up. It stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof: an image was before mine eyes, there was silence, and I heard a voice."*

There are not, perhaps, many instances of relations delivered in language more truly sublime as well as poetic. The fear and trembling of limbs, and horror of something unknown, which was the forerunner of the spectre; the dark veil of impenetrable mystery thrown over the form of the appearance; the undefined outline of the vision which was before his eyes; and the dread silence which preceded its speech, are an assemblage of images hardly surpassed by any writer in a more polished age.

But with the language in which the story is clothed, we have, at present, no concern; it is only brought as a proof of the very early belief of the reality of supernatural appearances: and this persuasion seems so rooted in the mind of man, that Dr. Johnson even ventured to assert, that, though all argument is against it, all belief is for it. But *pace tanti viri*, that expression, so often quoted, does not properly apply to the case. The question is not whether all the popular tales of absurd fear and superstition be true; whether ghosts meet the trembling wanderer in every lone church-yard; whether forsaken maidens leave their graves to terrify their inconstant and conscience-smitten swains; and misers return

* Job. iv. 13, &c. This book was written, in the opinion of the most learned commentators, before the Israelites came out of Egypt; consequently many ages before any other records, but those which are to be found in the same volume.

to the upper regions to brood over concealed treasures, or point out the spot where they have buried them; but whether there are, or not, multitudes of "ministring angels"* who execute the commands of the Almighty on earth: and whether these may not at times be permitted to assume bodily shapes, for purposes consistent with his general government of his creatures, though not always perhaps obvious to our limited understandings.

If it be said that there are no accounts of such visions in ancient or modern history so authenticated as to leave no room for doubt concerning them, it may be replied, that in both there are relations of this kind, as well attested as most other historical facts which are generally believed.† If it be affirmed, that no adequate consequences have ever been produced by such supernatural appearances; that no example is on record of misfortune having been prevented by them, or of the wicked having been persuaded or terrified into virtue; this is begging the question, and taking that for granted which remains to be proved. Though we may know what has been the consequence when such warnings have been slighted, we cannot possibly tell what might have happened had they not been attended to, nor how often they may have had an influence on the

* Hebrews i. 13. Milton and Young are not quoted as authorities, lest it should be said that they wrote as poets, and not as philosophers.

† Such, for instance, as the appearance of his evil genius to Brutus; of Sir George Villiers, previous to the murder of the Duke of Buckingham; of the vision which announced his approaching death to Thomas, Lord Lyttelton, and many others which might be enumerated.

conduct; for the altered intention in this case can be known only to the person who had originally formed it. And, indeed, he alone who made the heart can judge of the alteration of it; and the impressive circumstance of a warning, which he thinks out of the common course of human events, may have produced in the mind of the person who has experienced it, a conviction salutary to himself and beneficial to others, though the effect may not have been so sudden as to be noticed by the world.*

We should be careful therefore not to affirm too rashly, either that such things are not, or that they are useless. In the bounded state of our present faculties, many events in this world may be brought about by an agency of which we have as yet no conception. For my own part, such an idea, instead of being terrific, is rather delightful. I know that such things cannot happen but by the permission of the Father and Creator of all; and, if they ever do, it is a still more convincing and affecting proof of his tender care of his creatures. It is a sort of approximation to a better world; and the idea that such superior beings are appointed to watch over us, seems to give us an additional safety in this.

I am, &c. &c. †*†.

Art. DCCIX.

N°. X. *How far genius, when properly exerted, brings its own reward with it.*

" ——— Rectius occupat
Nomen Beati, qui Deorum
Muneribus sapienter uti." Hor.

It is a subject of curious meditation, to consider

* See the remarkable occurrence in the last century, known by the name of Colonel Gardiner's conversion.

how far genius, if properly regulated, is, like virtue, its own reward. Riches, and power, and rank, too frequently fall on the meanest and most stupid and profligate of mankind. These beings, who turn into curses the blessings which have been conferred upon them, are perfectly insensible to the charms of literature; or if they know any thing of it, know it only to hate those who excel in it. In their coarser minds a different estimate of eminence is encouraged; skill in intrigue, an oily tongue, a power of suppressing and concealing all emotions, which it is contrary to a selfish interest to betray; a conscience, which no nice scruples perplex; a brazen countenance, and an unfeeling heart! these are the qualities, which are acceptable to vulgar greatness. Of men, whose whole lives have been spent in schemes of ordinary ambition, the mere puppets of fortune, such are the only traits which excite the notice, or the comprehension.

If these observations be just, genius will be miserably disappointed in the expectation of worldly favour or advancement; and must turn inward, and look to itself for its principal, if not only, gratifications. It must elevate its sentiments "above this visible diurnal sphere;" it must learn to despise those gew-gaws and baubles, which corrupt and undiscerning Power heaps upon the unworthy, and which the foolish multitude pursues and worships with a base idolatry; it must learn to bear with fortitude the neglects and insults of those, whose heads are overset by prosperity and upstart command; and retire with a smile of placid or indignant contempt

from the half-witted dispensers of political trust, or honour, or emolument.

But is it in the power of minds thus endowed with a keener sensibility, to tranquillize, at all times, their emotions, and extract a balm for their wounded spirits, from a due estimate of their own dignity? I am fearful that, in the frailty of poor human nature, it is not! Much may undoubtedly be done by a virtuous exertion; low and degrading desires may gradually be nearly extinguished; and a calm loftiness of thought succeeding, may become habitual, and at last lift the possessor, as it were, into a higher order of existence.

A head and a heart thus modified, may in truth find an ample fund of satisfaction in their own resources. For them the morning unbars her gates, and opens all the glories of nature to their view, unalloyed by the folly and wickedness, which are prevalent in the principal haunts of human life; at such prospects their bosoms expand, and their fancies glow with unutterable pleasure; they see not, or see with pity, the major part of mankind grovelling at a distance from them in paths of dirt and danger, actuated by restless and disgraceful passions, and sinking at last, without even momentary enjoyment, into quagmires, and irrecoverable pits. At the same time, "their" own "minds are kingdoms to themselves;"* and kingdoms not only of power, but of virtuous power. Time and space are at their command; the pomp of thrones, and the most ingenious splendour of human hands, are insignificant com-

* Alluding to the beautiful words of the old song, "My mind to me a kingdom is."

pared with the creations of their ideas; they can call forth a paradise in a desert with the wand of a magician; and people the earth with angelic beauty and wisdom.

If such be the powers of genius when rightly directed, do its operations produce no recompense to itself? The sensual wretch, whose whole soul is imbruted, will deem these shadowy enjoyments worse than insipid; he will consider them as the play-things of insanity; and behold with ignorant contempt, or affected pity, the unhappiness of him, whom he will denominate a moon-struck visionary. Far different will be the opinion of the man of taste, and the sound philosopher. They well know, that "to advance ourselves in the order of intellectual beings" is next to virtue, probably one of the first purposes for which we are destined to a trial in this state of existence; and is indeed itself a very high degree of virtue. I have heard that a celebrated poet, now living, lately said, that "the only things he values in this world are virtue and genius;" and, giving credit to the report, I have admitted him to a still higher rank (if possible) in my admiration than before.

He who imagines that the best proof of talent is the worldly fruit it brings forth; and that our mental faculties are only given us for the purpose of accumulating wealth and titles, and carrying on with acuteness and success the ordinary business of society, must behold the frequent failure of genius in these points with wonder. He must hear the evidence of fame with doubt; and refuse conviction to his own observations; because he will generally see

men of the most brilliant capacities not only unwilling but unable to do the drudgery of practical affairs; because he will find men of subordinate and plodding parts, and not those who have pretensions to great intellectual preeminence, at the head of senates and councils; and neglect and insult pursue those of splendid endowments, even when they descend to a contest in these ambitious paths.

There is nothing, therefore, more necessary to be impressed on Genius, than to know how to set a proper estimate on itself. Till it can survey the objects of vulgar flattery with a calm and dignified scorn; till it can raise itself above a competition for those distinctions, which coarse minds are better qualified to obtain; till a rivalry of its sharp and delicate-edged wit, with heads of block and hearts of stone, can be withdrawn, it will, it must be miserable. Defeated by those it despises, its irritable feelings generate poisonous vapours, which envelop in clouds of gloom and dissatisfaction all its golden visions.

Let the poet "reverence the lyre," to which his propitious nativity has consecrated him. Let him look to its charms to soothe away his angry passions; or to strike from its chords the tones of indignation, by which mean-spirited, or stupid greatness is held up,

"Fit garbage for the hell-hound Infamy!"

The scenery of inanimate creation is at his command; "the breath of heaven, fresh-blowing;" meadows, and hills, and vallies, and woods, and streams, are open to his rambles, where vanity and

ostentation will seldom insult him, and the drunkenness of puft-up prosperity will have little opportunity to spit her loathsome jokes on his humble fortune!

Such are the firm convictions of the present writer; and, if he does not always act up to these sentiments, let no one question his sincerity. There are those who too well know that his ardent passions sometimes mislead him; and that he cannot always suppress the seduction of views of ambition, which, he trusts, are far below him. These delusive flames, which occasionally emit their dancing lights to draw him over quagmires and precipices, he has too much reason to dread and abhor. Every step thus set is accompanied by anxiety, and toil, and followed by regret, and disappointment.

May 12, 1807.

Art. DCCX.

N°. XI. *Hints for the Ruminator, and remarks on his style, and gravity and candour of manner and sentiment.*

"Virum volitare per ora." VIRG.

I HAVE had some doubt whether it would be prudent to print the following paper of my new correspondent, Mr. Random, who seems to have some knowledge of my personal history. But as my impartiality is to depend on the test of its insertion, I have at last determined to publish it; since its allusions seem harmless: but if there should be any thing in it at all pointed, no one has so much reason to complain as myself. The post mark is *Bath;* but this circumstance gives no clue to guess at the author

from that place of migratory inhabitants. One reason which has accelerated my decision to give it insertion, I must not conceal. It saves me from writing a paper myself at a moment of much hurry, and many other engagements.

June 12, 1807.

TO THE RUMINATOR.

Here, Sir, have I been *ruminating* for these three mornings to produce a paper for you, and not one sentence up to this very moment have I advanced. As thinking, I find, does no good, I will see how I can get on without thinking; and thus, Sir, will I have at you. A random shot, perhaps, may kill the most game. And game enough, no doubt, there is in the field of literature. I am sure the Edinburgh Reviewers find enough; and kill enough too! But they are excellent shot, and nobody will accuse them of not taking aim. Why, Sir, they never miss; and when they do not kill, they are sure to mangle! There is another Review too, which they say, has tried to catch their knack; yet, at present, it is reported, it is but a bungler; but there is little doubt it will soon learn it; for the art is not half so difficult as some folks think it.

Let us see! What must come next? Why, as I do not possess *All The Talents*, (though I hope I am a little better off than the man who celebrates them,) I am in a little bit of a *quandary;* but as stopping to think does harm, I must rush on again, and I dare say I shall drop upon something. Ah! it just comes into my head to ask you, why you suppose a

book, that was good for nothing two hundred years ago, becomes good for a great deal now; for what every body will allow a great deal—a great deal of money! You seem, Sir, not a little infected with this mania yourself. I do not know whether you give great prices, but I am certain you give a great many pages to extracts, which were very base ore at the time they were written; and I defy the power of time to transmute them into genuine metal. Somebody, however, whispers me, that they shew the progess of language, and the state of manners; and I do not know how to answer that: indeed, I am not bound to stay to answer any body. If I stop for one moment, I shall be fixed, and never move again.

To come then, Sir, to your lives, and essays—I confess, I wish they had a little more fun in them! Cannot you write *currente calamo*, as I do? and then I think you would now and then catch a jest by the bye. It would even fix itself in spite of you; and you would not have time to strike it off with your pen. For my own part, I always thought the world was a jest, and that jesting therefore was the best mode of treating every thing that belongs to it. But you have told us, that *you* hate jests; and, therefore, I am determined to try your impartiality by sending you this. I know that your enemies (and you have many) will triumph, and enjoy the laugh. But never mind; it will prove that you can keep your temper, and are not to be put aside from your purpose by a joke.

But your lives, Sir, are too panegyrical. Your heroes and heroines are inspired with nothing but

genius and virtue—you are the very milk of human kindness; and your heart seems to glow with continued admiration. Why, Sir, I had heard a very different character of you; that you was bitter and censorious; difficultly pleased; ingenious in finding fault; and fertile in the language of satire. I had heard that you had written a novel full of severity and sarcasm, that had made a Lord Mayor take the Attorney General's opinion whether he might challenge you; a Lady Mayoress fret herself sick; and a country Baronet never speak for a month! What is become of all this gall? I wish you would put a little of it into your modern biography. What! be all benevolence and respect to a poor devil of a poet, and hate a Lord Mayor, and his fashionable wife, regardless of all *the sprigs of fashion* belonging to her; and expose to cruel ridicule a man of fortune and title! For shame, Mr. Ruminator! I must request you to turn the tables upon these people.

And now for your Essays! They are to be sure as grave as a sermon.—But I am not quite so much surprised about them; for I once heard that celebrated nomenclator, Mr. Tyson, speak of your Spanish gravity; and it seems he was right with a vengeance. Is it not possible for you to strike out a casual spark of vivacity? You are even more solemn than *The Rambler*, of which old Will. Duncombe, that runner to the wits, used to complain so much, when it was first published; but I hope, if you hereafter make an attempt to gambol a little, you will not be as awkward in your gambols as the Doctor was. Perhaps, however, I am very mischievous in urging you to that, in which you will

probably fail. I doubt if you can be merry; and I am sure you cannot be witty: bitter I know you can be; a little spice of it would give a zest to your future *ruminations*.

Do you not think a few caustic touches on some of your cotemporaries would be as interesting as the nauseating sweets of perpetual praise? Some variety I know you are capable of—Grave as is your present morality, I remember, not more than fifteen years ago, you could produce a love-tale, over which young girls and love-sick swains have ever since hung enamoured! Try another chord of your many-stringed harp; and prove, whether you cannot sound the notes of censure and shame!

Has every writer of verses merit? And are literati always wise and good? Savage, and Boyse, and Dermody, and perhaps Chatterton, will exhibit a different story. If Johnson could cover over with the thin disguise of apologies the profligate habits, and boisterous temper of Savage, you must not! But I am growing serious like yourself. Let me proceed upon my rambles.

Cannot you cut up poor Beattie like some of your brother critics, and prove that he was a very vapid and mediocre poet, and a very weak philosopher? That he was stained with the crime of corresponding with learned bishops, and learned ladies, and still more with the audacious guilt of despising the metaphysics of David Hume? Cannot you convict him of flattering a Duchess, and from the recluse habits of an academic life and a shy temper, of being not a little dazzled with her rank? Cannot you shew Roscoe to be a book-making drudge, and

Hayley a man incapable of elegant and instructive composition? Mrs. Carter vastly learned, but vastly dull; and Tom Warton a diligent antiquary, but totally incapable of making a luminous use of his materials?

You may hence, if you will, turn to politics, and shew Pitt to have been a rash, ignorant, and despicable statesman; and Lord Henry Petty the greatest of financiers. But be sure you do not abuse his worthy successor Spencer Perceval, who has learned so perfectly how to calculate for our pockets by his adroitness in crown-prosecutions; and can terrify his adversaries into instant silence by a threat of the secrets he acquired in his late office of Attorney General. And do not reproach Canning for his apostacy from the Muses, or for his disrespect to those qualities, on which his own claims to notice were founded: make some allowances for the frailties of poor human nature, and yield something to the fumes of sudden elevation! Be respectful to birth and rank; touch not the foibles of a worn-out nobility; tear not off the ancient mantle, that covers a Howard; and let the bright ermine of a new Peer continue to hide his history and his origin!

Proceed, good Sir; fly along the surface, as I do, scratching some, wounding others; and you will be infinitely more entertaining to many, as well as to your humble servant, and constant reader,

HARRY RANDOM.

June 4, 1807.

Art. DCCXI.

N°. XII. *On the scenic representation of the Tragedy of Macbeth.*

"Ita vertere seria ludo." Hor.

TO THE RUMINATOR.

Sir,

Much as has been written concerning the mighty powers of Shakspeare, the subject is even now hardly to be considered as exhausted. Lives of that extraordinary author, new editions of his works, with copious and even voluminous commentaries upon them, continue to be published almost in every year; and new matter and new illustrations are received by the public with such avidity, to use his own words,

"As if increase of appetite had grown
By what it fed on."

Far be it from me to dissent from the general opinion; on the contrary, my admiration of the bard, the pride of my country, and perhaps, all circumstances considered, her most original genius —increases with my years. It has grown with my growth; and those humorous, moral, and pathetic scenes which were the delight of my youth, form one of the greatest charms and most attractive pleasures of a time of life not far distant from old age.

It has always appeared to me peculiar to Shakspeare, and a marked distinction between him and all other dramatic writers, that those scenes which appear the finest, and give the highest gratification in the closet, fall short of, and disappoint the ex-

pectation on the stage, sometimes even to disgust. Whether the remark has been made before I know not, but probably the sensation must have been often experienced. Other plays, both ancient and modern, are sometimes well represented throughout, and with appropriate scenes and decorations; but I never yet saw a play of Shakspeare, of either Muse, which appeared to me to answer the design of the author, or give a just representation of his characters, situations, and scenery. The characters are often ill drest, the situations and scenery misunderstood, the comic parts made serious, and the serious comic.

This was, I presume, the reason why in the noble undertaking of Messrs. Boydell, the painters were directed to divest their minds carefully of every impression left on them, by the representation on the stage of the scenes allotted them to delineate, and to attend to the text of their author only; and, in most instances, they did this very successfully. In general they did not disgrace their pieces by the puerile absurdities which on the stage please the upper gallery only.*

Certainly it must be allowed that the good sense and classic imagination of Mr. Kemble has reformed many of the most striking abuses in the manner in which the plays of Shakspeare used to be represented; yet still it seems to me that much remains to be done, and many alterations to be made, before

* Yet that great painter, Sir Joshua Reynolds, in his celebrated picture of the death of Cardinal Beaufort, has embodied *the busy meddling fiend* on the Cardinal's pillow. A useful hint to managers, as it would have a pretty as well as novel effect on the stage.

some of the finest dramas of our favourite author can be seen without disgust.

In the tragedy of Macbeth for instance, (the finest of all Shakspeare's plays, in the opinion of Dr. Farmer, Mr. Stevens, and, perhaps, of all good judges) some of the most striking scenes are so represented as to produce an effect directly the reverse of the author's meaning. In the closet what can be more awfully impressive than the appearance and predictions of the witches? But what is the effect of it on the stage? A parcel of disgusting old women are seen, with long beards, and making grimaces like the clown in a pantomime; and instead of producing horror, or the weighty impression which made Macbeth *start, and seem to fear*, they excite no sensation but bursts of laughter from the galleries, and indignant contempt from all the spectators who have common sense. Surely this might be managed better. Rites supposed to be supernatural should not be brought forward in too strong a light. Let the witches and their cauldron be at the bottom of the stage, and be just visible through a mist or cloud. Let their voices be heard, but their forms only dimly and imperfectly seen; there will then be some scope for the imagination, and the scenic allusion will not be so violently destroyed.

The same observations are applicable to the different apparitions which they shew to Macbeth, all which, to produce any effect on the mind, should be seen only in an imperfect and undefined manner; such for instance, as the view of the haunted chamber in the popular opera of Bluebeard.

But still worse is the appearance of the ghost of

Banquo managed. No stretch or power of fancy can make it seem supernatural. Brought forward in all the glare of light on the very front of the stage, with his whitened face, staring eyes, and bloody throat, it is impossible to suppose that the other guests do not see it as well as Macbeth. The good sense of Garrick, I think, banished the airy dagger; and is not the ghost of Banquo the same? Had the poet any other meaning than to shew the power and influence of conscience on the mind? Why then should one be represented to the spectators more than the other? Surely the effect would be much more striking, if the chair which Macbeth fancies full were in reality less empty; for it would then plainly appear to be the effect only of his wounded conscience, which would give, as the poet designed, an awful and affecting lesson; whereas now the ghost excites more laughter than terror. If he must appear, let him at least be exiled to the bottom of the stage, and be hid in some degree by the table and the guests. Unless I mistake, his appearance was once omitted, and the gallery critics insisted on seeing their favourite again. Something must certainly be allowed to the populace; but Mr. Kemble's character is so high that he might resist such a disgrace to our national taste; and I think it also so firm that I may apply to him the lines of Horace,

"Nec sumit aut ponit secures
Arbitrio popularis auræ."

I am, &c. &c. †*†.

Art. DCCXII.

N°. XIII.

" Ita facillime
Sine invidia laudem invenias et amicos pares." Ter.

TO THE RUMINATOR.

Sir,

Emboldened by the example of your ingenious friend Mr. Random in a former Number of your Censura, and still more by the candour which led you to insert his half serious, half ironical address, I too venture to offer you my advice. It will not be conveyed in terms of equal wit and humour, for I am, alas! the dullest of the dull, a prosing matter-of-fact fellow of the old school. Wit and humour are, indeed, fascinating and most engaging qualities, but they are neither in the power of every man, nor are they equally delightful to all. That ridicule is the test of truth, though long a favourite maxim, is at length completely exploded by the much more unerring test of good sense. Who now would wish to see it applied either to books or their authors? Who would desire to see an Addison changed to a Sterne, or the author of the Rambler even to " old Will Duncombe" himself, though certainly that respectable gentleman must be confessed to have been as perfectly innocent with regard to wit, as the facetious steward in the " Drummer or the Haunted House."

But you are accused by your *demo-critic* correspondent of not abusing, or not pointing out the failings of those, of whose lives you give sketches. Now to apologize for vice, as Johnson did for the unfortunate Savage, is surely unbecoming a philo-

sopher or a good man; but it cannot be necessary to display that vice to the world. Yourself an author and (not "a writer of verses," but which is very different) a poet, in you it would seem like envy to disturb the ashes of the dead in search of their private faults, when your business with them, like ours, is only as public characters. The world is connected with an author only by his works: and, as you justly observe in your criticism on the Memoirs of Mrs. Carter, it is unworthy of a strong mind to be biassed in the opinion of a work by the private character, or rather what you conceive to be so, of the author. And this, Sir, naturally leads me to advise you—for what claim have you to escape the fate of your brother Essayists?—rather to finish some of those poems which you have already begun, and of which parts are published in your CENSURA. By what right (if I may assume that angry tone) do you so tantalize the expectations of your readers? Month after month have we been expecting the conclusion of RETIREMENT, and the remaining VISITS of your WIZARD, to seats in your own county, consecrated by the historic Muse. If the bent of your genius does not at present take that direction, "try," to use your ingenious correspondents words, "another chord of your many-stringed harp;" yet still exert your own talents, and instead of depending on such casual communications as the lively essay of Mr. Random, or the present contrast to it, give us more of your own original compositions. *Strike the harp* again, *(though not in praise of Bragela;)* unmask pretended patriotism; detect the empiricism of ministers; unlock the treasures of historic lore; pour out, on any subject, the fruits of a well-stored

mind, and as your great predecessor says, write yourself out before you die.

Your Bath correspondent alludes to your juvenile production of Mary de Clifford. I have read that elegant and affecting tale more than once with renewed pleasure; but though I can say with Dryden,

"Old as I am, for ladies' love unfit,
The power of beauty I remember yet,"

still I cannot wish that you should now employ your powers on a similar work. "To every thing," said the wisest of men, "there is a season," and that which became you in youth, and was creditable to your early genius, would be a waste of the strength of your mind in maturity.

From you, Sir, we now expect something of more consequence; something which, while it may delight your equals, may help to form the minds of the youthful; something which may lead to the important conviction, that morality is not necessarily dulness, nor instruction tediousness. Hac itur ad astra—this is the road to that double immortality, to which both as an author and as a man you must, and ought to aspire; that you may in neither respect be disappointed is the sincere wish of

Your unknown friend,

LONDINENSIS.

ART. DCCXIII.

N°. XIV. *On the Traits and Concomitants of Poetical Genius.*

"Sic animis natum inventumque poema juvandis,
Si paulum a summo discessit, vergit ad imum." HOR.

IT has seldom happened that a man has finally obtained the fame of a poet, whose life has not

exhibited some traits in coincidence with the character of his art. The Muse is a jealous mistress, that will scarcely ever suffer any other to divide the attentions she considers due to her. And whoever is devoted to her alone, must necessarily possess many peculiarities.

There have been some poets indeed, who have held forth, that their productions were the mere amusement of a few leisure hours. But such assertions originated from a silly and unbecoming affectation. To have a taste for poetry, and to read it with delight, even though it be only occasionally and accidentally indulged, is very common; but to create it, requires a very different sort of power and habit.

If therefore we examine into the biography of those, who have aspired to this highest rank of authors, we shall find that those, who did not make it the principal, if not exclusive, object of their ambition, were either mere versifiers, deficient in all the main distinctions of this celestial art, or so weak in execution, that all their struggles fell lifeless in the attempt.

Ansty, and Cambridge, and Graves, might write doggrel verses; and John Hoole, and Potter, and Murphy, and Carlyle, might translate; but I can scarcely allow them the character of poets. The Wartons, Mason, Burns, Bampfylde, Cowper, Hurdis, Darwin, Beattie, Mrs. Carter, Mrs. Smith, and Kirke White, &c. exhibit a very different picture. In each of these will be found many prominent and striking features. It will be perceived that those of them especially, who have most the power of af-

fecting the heart, were themselves the victims of extreme sensibility. Something romantic and uncongenial with the ordinary routine of life, marks the whole progress of their existence. Their lot, as far as wealth and honours are concerned, is obscure; and their efforts are unattended with the smallest success. Some of them absolutely incapable, and others enabled with great difficulty, to emerge from the gripe of poverty itself, they seem almost to prove, that the smile of the Muse is a signal for being condemned to pecuniary embarrassment, or anxiety.

The abstraction of mind, which generates and nourishes poetical excellence, is inconsistent with those minute attentions, by which people make their way in the world. Liberal sentiments, an indignant spirit, and a tender heart are all constantly checking the progress of such a journey. But these are the very fountains, from whence the bard draws the living colours of his song.

Hence the mere harmonious rhymer, the lively delineator of familiar manners, the writer of dry ethical precepts, which address the understanding only, even in verse the most musical, and diction the most correct, may, perhaps, assort more advantageously with worldlings, and succeed as they do. But he is not a poet; he is deficient in the soul of poetry. If the composition neither furnishes food to the fancy, nor elevates or softens the heart, the very essence of the Muse is wanting.

Nothing disgusts me more than the vulgar habit of confounding the versifier with the poet. The versifier is a very common kind of being; the gift

of poetry is among the rarest of Nature's endowments. It requires no waste of the spirits; no exhausting thrills of the bosom; no world-forgetting excursions of the imagination to produce thousands of the most melodious rhymes. But the temperament of a poet is that of passion.

Perhaps of all the lately deceased poets the two most popular have been Burns and Cowper. And never was popularity more justly bestowed. They had both of them been steeped in the stream of Parnassus. They lived, as well as wrote, with every mark of the Muse upon their daily habits. They were the children of sensibility, which was the bane, as well as the source of their happiness. Had they deadened this sensibility, by giving up their talents to worldly pursuits, they might have been lawyers, or statesmen, or heroes, but the well-fount of poetry would have been dried up.

It seems extraordinary that the Muse should be able to exert herself with success in the midst of anxities, sorrows, and sufferings; but experience furnishes perpetual instances of it. The "Fairy Queen" must have been composed amidst perpetual alarms, in a country of barbarous rebels, impelled by want, revenge, and despair; in momentary insecurity; when a successful incursion of the threatening hordes who surrounded the author, would, even if he could save himself and his family from murder, condemn the remainder of his days to poverty and ruin. The "Paradise Lost" was dictated by the sublime and inspired Bard, under the clouds of proscription and disgrace, with the sword of state dangling, almost by a hair, over his head. It

is probable that their deep afflictions heightened the strong colours with which Nature had imbued the materials of their rich minds.

These peculiar faculties therefore are, beyond doubt, a dangerous and fearful gift; and we may forgive, though we may sometimes indulge a smile of contempt at, the cold and prudential, who shake their heads and bless themselves for having escaped it. But he, who is so stupid and so brutal-hearted as not to behold it with pity and reverence, even in its errors and its misfortunes, is a wretch who scarcely deserves the name of an intellectual being. I never contemplate the fate of poor Collins without a mixture of indescribable grief, and awe, and admiration. How eloquently and affectingly has Johnson said, "How little can we venture to exult in any intellectual powers, or literary attainments, when we consider the condition of poor Collins! I knew him a few years ago, full of hopes and full of projects, versed in many languages, high in fancy, and strong in retention. This busy and forcible mind is now under the government of those who lately would not have been able to comprehend the least and most narrow of its designs."——"That man is no common loss. The moralists all talk of the uncertainty of fortune, and the transitoriness of beauty; but it is yet more dreadful to consider, that the powers of the mind are equally liable to change; that understanding may make its appearance and depart; that it may blaze and expire!"*

It cannot be denied that this excessive sensibility is a blessing or a curse according to its direction.

* See Cens. Lit. IV. p. 351.

But the good and the evil are so nicely and imperceptibly intermixed, that rash or at least very bold is the hand, that will venture to attempt the separation of them, without fearing to destroy the good and the evil together.

Of our old poets the minuter shades of character have not been preserved. Of those of our days, of most of whom the curiosity of modern literature has drawn forth a more familiar and private account, all the existing memorials furnish ample demonstration of the truth of my remarks. I have learned from several who knew him intimately, that the sensibility of Gray was even morbid; and often very fastidious, and troublesome to his friends. He seemed frequently overwhelmed by the ordinary intercourse, and ordinary affairs of life. Coarse manners, and vulgar or unrefined sentiments overset him; and it is probable that the keenness of his sensations embittered the evils of his frame, and aggravated the hereditary gout which terminated his life at a middle age. He perhaps gave his feelings too little vent through the channels of composition, and brooded in too much indolence over the unarrested workings of his mind.

The sensibility of Rousseau was indulged to a selfish and vicious excess. But still it would be a narrow and despicable prejudice to deny, that it exhibited in its ebullitions a high degree of genius. Burke flaming with resentment at the political evils produced by this eloquent writer's delusive lights, has drawn a just but most severe character of him. Yet Burke himself, whose radiant mind was illuminated by all the rich colours of the rainbow, had

nerves tremulous at every point with incontrolable irritability.

There are many, who require to be convinced of these important truths; who ought to be shamed out of their mean censures of the singularities or the weaknesses of genius; and who should learn, if they draw comfort from them to suppress their triumph, at the mingled qualities of the most exalted of human beings!

August, 8, 1807.

Art. DCCXIV.

N°. XV. *Harry Random's Second Letter to the Ruminator.*

—— "Quid æternis minorem
Consiliis animum fatigas? Hor.

TO THE RUMINATOR.

Sir,

You have shewn both courage and good sense by the insertion of my former letter; and I trust you will not lose your credit with me by refusing admission to this. Though my pace is not always equally rapid, you must allow me to be excursive and superficial. I laugh sometimes in bitterness of heart; but I will never expose myself to the accusation of weeping, when I ought to laugh. I leave it to you to be angry with those at whom you ought to smile; and to be indignant where you should despise. You remember that extraordinary passage in the epitaph which Swift wrote for himself:

"*Ubi sæva indignatio ulterius cor lacerare nequit!*"

But yet I will do you the justice to say, that you have not the spleen and misanthropy of Swift: wit-

ness those glowing passages of praise which often appear upon your pages; and which, in my opinion, would frequently admit of some abatement.

For me, who wander over the wide world with a determination to let nothing dwell seriously on my mind; but skimming the surface of every thing, to enjoy its sweets, and lightly reject its bitters; for me, the world appears a comedy; and, to own the truth, too much of a comedy! If it does not call forth my resentment, alas! it too little generates my love. You haters have the advantage of us there: I perceive you can love too, with violence! You remind me too acutely of the words of a common song:

> "A generous friendship no cold medium knows;
> Glows with one love, with one resentment glows!"

Harry Random, with all his carlessness and gaiety, and all his attempts to "set the table in a roar," knows not these gratifying extremes!

Look, however, around you on the world; or if you must confine yourself to literature, look on your brother authors, and observe how little there is worthy either of affection or disgust. I wish, therefore, you would learn to treat your subjects with a little more complacency; with a little more of that playfulness of ideas, which generates ease and cheerfulness; instead of assuming the character of

> "Wisdom in sable garb array'd,
> Immers'd in rapturous thought profound;
> And Melancholy, silent Maid,
> With leaden eye, that loves the ground!"

I had written thus far, when your two last num-

bers reached me; having been for some time absent from this place on a tour. Your last proves to me how little you are affected by my advice; or, perhaps, how little capable you are of variation! O Sir, do not, I beseech you, indulge so much in these dull sermonizing essays! You infect even me with your gravity! Instead of moving with my wonted elasticity, I shall become as soporific as yourself!

Why should you argue with such solemn earnestness for the privileges of poets? I do not know in what they differ from other men, unless in their imprudence and their folly! If an author makes me laugh, I am grateful to him; but I cannot forgive his troublesome eccentricities, because, forsooth, he makes not only himself, but his readers, *miserable!* It is said that *Dulce est decipere in loco;* and what is the place, in which this is not desirable?

You are told by your correspondent, Londinensis, "to unmask pretended patriotism, and detect the empiricism of ministers." Do it then with a playful hand, if you can: gently and smilingly draw off the disguise; but tear it not open with rude indignation, leaving wounds by the violence of the rent; nor probe the sore to the bottom with a rough and unsparing lancet. The man, who makes us smile is forgiven even while he exposes us; but severity, harshness, and insult no one ever forgets. And are you in such conscious security yourself, as undauntedly to incur the hazard of revenge? I have heard that you have enemies enough without wantonly provoking more; or whetting the appetites of those, to whose malice you have been already exposed! You have been guilty of unpardonable offences among your neighbouring squires:

" Fame in the shape of one Sir Harry
(By this time all the parish know it)
Had told, that thereabouts did tarry
A wicked imp, they call a poet:

Who prowl'd the country far and near,
Bewitch'd the children of the peasants,
Dried up the cows, and lam'd the deer,
And suck'd the eggs, and kill'd the pheasants."*

" For something he was heard to mutter,
How in the park beneath an old tree
(Without design to hurt the butter,
Or any malice to the poultry,)

He once or twice had pen'd a sonnet;
Yet hop'd that he might save his bacon;
Numbers would give their oaths upon it,
He ne'er was for a conjurer taken."†

No, Sir! Your neighbours will not forgive you, even if you can justly plead the excuse contained in this quotation! Why then urge them to load you with still heavier calumny? You trust to the rectitude of your intentions, and the openness of your conduct! Alas! what a dupe are you then to the folly which you despise! These are not the weapons with which your opponents will fight. They will not meet you in the field face to face. They will way-lay you in the dark; their poison will be concealed; but it will be sure. Your reputation will secretly moulder away; your anxieties will increase; and mortification and neglect will bring your grey hairs to the grave before their time.

" Vive la bagatelle!" but let us have no more of this " sober sadness!" HARRY RANDOM.

Bath, Sept. 5, 1807.

* See Gray's Long Story. † Ibid.

Art. DCCXV.

N°. XVI. *Reflections arising from the Season of the Year.*

" The dark and pillowy cloud; the sallow trees,
Seem o'er the ruins of the year to mourn;
And cold, and hollow the inconstant breeze
Sobs through the falling leaves and wither'd fern."

Ch. Smith.

I am afraid Mr. Random will give me up as incapable of amendment, when he reads the present paper. He will find me still in my old melancholy track. Alas! though he guesses well at some of my grievances, he knows not half the causes I have for gravity.

There is something in the fall of the leaf, which always overcomes me with a pensive turn of mind. It is a cast of frame, which is most beautifully described by Thomson in his enchanting delineation of this season of the year. When he speaks of the "faint gleams" of the autumn, and "the fading many-coloured woods," what poet can equal him? The foliage eddying from the trees, and choaking up the forest walks, is a circumstance which touches the heart with an indescribable kind of sensation! All Mr. Random's raillery cannot dissipate the sombre hue of my thoughts at such a sight. My bosom is then filled with a thousand tender and solemn reflections; and sometimes they will, in spite of me, clothe themselves in verse.

Thus it happened the other morning, when, on rising, and looking from my window, I saw that the season had already begun its devastations in the shades which surround me.

Sonnet suggested by the approach of Autumn.

Another fall of leaf! And yet am I
No nearer to those sweet rewards of toil,
The praise of learning and the good man's smile!
Year follows year, and age approaches nigh,
But still I linger in obscurity:
My painful days no sounds of fame beguile;
But Calumny, instead, would fain defile
The rhymes I build with many a tear and sigh.
Perchance ere yet another Autumn throws
The faded foliage from the mourning trees,
My vain presumptuous hopes may find repose;
And all these empty wishes Death appease!
Beneath the turf my weary bones be prest;
And the cold earth lie on this beating breast!

Having thus transcribed this sonnet, I hesitate to let it stand here, lest it should seem ungrateful to some respected friends, from whom, within the last year, I have received unmerited encouragement. But I am sure their candour will not interpret my expressions too strictly. From their praise I have felt a cheering consolation, which, though I have little reason to be in good humour with the world, has given in my sight new colours to existence here. I know, indeed, that I am too anxious to possess, as well as to deserve, their favourable opinion. And that he who thinks me careless of a good name, or not morbidly alive even to the whispers of calumny, is marvellously ignorant of the nature of my irritable disposition.

It has been my lot, if not innocently, at least by a very pardonable indiscretion of pen to make ene-

mies; of whose life, it has, in return, become the future business to traduce and blacken me. Lost in my books, or in distant speculations, I live in hourly danger; unprotected, and undefended; while these wretches are always at their post, and working in the mine. In this gloom the praise of more impartial and more intelligent judges is all I have to lighten me; and to give me a chance of counteracting these deeds of darkness. I cannot conceal how anxious I am to retain this consolation.

Sept. 21, 1807.

ART. DCCXVI.

N°. XVII. *On some Passages of Pope's Translation of Homer.*

"Qui quid sit pulchrum, quid turpe, quid utile, quid non,
Plenius ac melius Chrysippo et Crantore dicit." HOR.

TO THE RUMINATOR.

SIR,

WHEN the concurrent opinions of all ages, ancient as well as modern, concerning the merits of Homer, are considered, I trust I shall not be deemed to have merely had recourse to a schoolboy's common-place-book, in venturing to express my admiration of him. If he was in the opinion of Horace *(judice te non sordidus auctor naturæ verique)* as great in morals and philosophy, as he is universally allowed to be in poetry; if as an historian, a geographer, a soldier, and even a physician,* no succeeding writer

* In the original and proper sense of the word, ἰατρος included every branch of the art of healing.

in the most improved and polished age, has equalled his fame; and what the Roman poet said of his Jupiter may justly be applied to him, *nec viget quicquam simile aut secundum;* surely any dissertation which may tend to make him better understood, can hardly be thought foreign from the purpose of a literary work. Perhaps, therefore, you will not consider that portion of your CENSURA, which is appropriated to *rumination*, disgraced by the admission of an attempt to elucidate the meaning of a passage of the ancient Bard, which still remains doubtful and obscure, though it has been explained in several different ways.

In the third volume of Harmer's "Observations on Scripture," the ingenious and learned author gives some few specimens of his manner of applying to the classics, as well as to sacred history, illustrations taken from travels into the countries where the scene of action lay. In one of these he endeavours to explain the meaning of a part of Hector's soliloquy in the twenty-second Iliad, line 126, &c.

Hector has been deliberating whether he should meet Achilles unarmed, and offer him terms of peace; but suddenly recollecting the ferocity of his temper, and his implacable hatred, he exclaims, "but why do I employ my mind upon such thoughts, for he would kill me even though unarmed."

Ου μεν πως νυν εστιν απο δρυος εδ' απο πετρης
Τω οαριζεμεναι ωστε παρθενος ηϊθεος τε,
Παρθενος ηϊθεος τ' οαριζετην αλληλοισιν.

In these lines is the difficulty; their literal translation is this. "For it is not possible now to con-

verse with this man from an oak or from a rock, as a maiden and youth, as a maiden and youth converse with each other."

Now it is certainly not very easy to comprehend what is meant by conversing from an oak or a rock, since young men and maidens are not wont to "breathe out the tender tale" from oaks or rocks: nor does it seem to apply well to mere friendly intercourse. The Latin version is the same, and exactly literal, both in Didymus's, and in Clarke's Homer, and therefore throws no light on the subject. The old Greek scholiast in that edition which bears the name of Didymus, has a long note upon it to this effect: "There is no using such language towards Achilles, says Hector, as young men and women use in their conversation. The ancients when they found children who had been exposed near oaks or rocks, thought they were produced from them, and this gave rise to that opinion. For the ancients lived chiefly in the fields, and rarely possessed houses, so that the women who brought forth their children in the mountains, lodged them in the hollows of the oaks or rocks. In them they were sometimes found, and then supposed to have been produced from them. This is the account given by Didymus."

Clarke has copied this note without making any addition to it; and Eustathius, as quoted by Pope, explains the passage in the same manner, and supposes it to have been a common proverbial expression for an idle old tale, and to have been used by Hector in this manner, "Achilles will not listen to such tales as may pass with youths and maidens."

Pope himself renders the passage with his usual diffuseness; *aut viam invenit aut facit;* where the sense is not obvious, he uses no ceremony towards poor Homer, but gives a paraphrase of what appears to him to be the general meaning. In his version he glides smoothly over the difficulty, takes no notice of the repetition of παρθενος ηϊθεος τ', translates the preposition ἀπο at, (a sense of which I believe it is incapable) and with the utmost sang froid, by one stroke of his magic pen levels the rock into a *plain.* *

Harmer, with his accustomed copiousness of quotation, † has brought together a variety of passages from different authors, to shew, what would be sufficiently proved by common sense only, that it is usual in hot countries to sit in the shade; and that Homer therefore meant to allude to the meeting of persons *on account* of some rock or tree whose shade invites them to repose under it.

* "What hope of mercy from this vengeful foe,
But womanlike to fall, and fall without a blow?
We greet not here as man conversing man,
Met *at an oak,* or journeying *o'er a plain;*
No season now for calm familiar talk,
Like youths and maidens in an ev'ning walk." *

POPE'S HOMER.

† No disrespect is here meant to Mr. Harmer, to whose diligent researches the Christian world is much obliged, and many of whose explanations of the Scriptures, drawn from eastern manners and customs, are not only probable, but carry the most complete conviction with them.

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* It is indeed impossible for four more contemptible verses to have proceeded from a bellman. *Editor.*

Harmer's interpretation depends upon the propriety of translating ἀπο *under*, or *on account of*. Of the former meaning I doubt if there be any example; of the latter there are many, some of which, in the New Testament, he has pointed out. Yet still the obscurity of the passage seems to me to remain the same. A young man and maiden may very naturally converse *under* an oak, but I am utterly at a loss to comprehend how they can converse *upon account* of it, or indeed how such a simile could apply to the meeting of Hector and Achilles.

But in reality it appears to me that Hector's meaning is totally different from any of these suppositions, and that the *oak* and the *rock* are mentioned only as conveying an idea of *security*. He considers his antagonist as so entirely under the government of passion,* that he would be capable of killing him though a suppliant†, and unarmed. Achilles is to him as a wild beast, from whom he could not be safe unless he could converse with him from the top of an *oak*, or the summit of a *rock*. "I will not take off my armour then," says he, "for he would kill me though unarmed, for there is no possibility of conversing with him from an oak or a rock (that is, in perfect safety) as a young man and maiden converse with each other," (that is, amicably and without fear.)

* Impiger, iracundus, inexorabilis acer,
Jura neget sibi nata, nihil non arroget armis.
Hor. de Art. Poet. f. 121, &c.

† Ου δε τι μ' αιδεσεται χλωνεις δε μιν γυμνον εοντα.

For the ancients esteemed the character of a suppliant as sacred. See the conduct of the same Achilles to Priam, in the twenty-fourth book.

If this conjecture be well founded, the difficulty vanishes at once; ἀπο is translated according to its usual meaning, *from*; the sense is clear, and there is no need of having recourse to the far-fetched explanation of Eustathius, which even darkens obscurity itself. The *oak* and *rock* are ideas almost unconnected with the *youth* and *maiden*, and should be separated by a comma at least, if not by a parenthesis. Still, however, the grammatical construction must be deemed harsh and the transition too sudden; and this explanation is offered rather as an endeavour to clear up this obscure passage, than as proceeding from a complete conviction, that it has succeeded in giving the true sense of the author.* †*†.

* There is no note upon this passage by Stephens; but in the Greek MS. notes, by Aloysius, to the Florentine Homer in 1518, appended to Didymus's edition, is the following supposition. "That the heart of Achilles seemed so hard that he must have been produced from an oak or a rock." According to this the passage may be thus rendered: "There is no possibility of conversing with him, who must have sprung from an oak or a rock, as a young man and maiden converse with each other." This is certainly a happy and ingenious conjecture; and it is much strengthened by part of the upbraiding speech of Patroclus to Achilles, B. xvi. l. 34 and 35, to which possibly the poet meant to allude.

Οὐδε Θέτις μήτηρ γλαυκη σε δε λικλε θαλασσα,
Πετραι τ' ηλιβατοι οἱι τοι νοος 'εστιν ἀπηνης.

And so Virgil, Lib. iv. l. 365, &c.

——————Duris genuit te cautibus horrens
Caucasus, Hyrcanæque admorunt ubera tigres.

Additional Observations by the Editor.

THE Editor has inserted with much pleasure the ingenious criticism, contained in his learned correspondent's communication. But he knows the accomplished writer's liberal mind too well, to fear that he shall displease him by frankly owning, that on the present occasion he differs very strongly from him. There appears to the Editor no difficulty in the simple and obvious construction of the passage. He conceives that it is perfectly in the spirit and letter of the Greek and Latin poetry to describe youths and maids as "breathing out the tender tale *from* oaks and rocks." He thinks, therefore, that Homer means, to make Hector say, "It is not possible now to converse with the same gentleness and carelessness, as a maiden and youth do, whose soft tales issue from an oak and a rock." Cowper seems to have understood it in the same way:

"It is no time from oak or hollow rock
With him to parley, as a nymph and swain,
A nymph and swain soft parley mutual hold,
But rather to engage in combat fierce
Incontinent."———

That this is one of the most usual senses of απο may be exemplified by innumerable passages. Thus Theocritus, in his first Idyllium, V. 7, 8.

Αδιον, ω ποιμαν, το τευν μελος, η τὸ καταιχες
Τηνʼ ἀπο τας πετρας καταλειβεται υψοθεν υδωρ.

Again, in the twenty-sixth Idyllium, V. 10.

Πευθευς δʼ αλιβατω πετρας απο πανταʼ ἰθεωρει.

And thus M. Green, in his GROTTO.

" While insects *from* the threshold preach."

With regard to rocks being the scenes of love-tales, the following from the same poet, Idyllium, II. v. 17, 18, is decisive.

καθεζομενος δ' επι πετρας
Υψηλας, εις ποντον ὁρων, αειδε τοιαυτα.

And in Virgil *the rock* occurs among images the most delightful and soothing in rural scenery.

" Hinc tibi, quæ semper vicino ab limite sepes,
Hyblæis apibus florem depasta salicti,
Sæpe levi somnum suadebit inire susurro.
Hinc alta sub rupe canet frondator ad auras;
Nec tamen interea raucæ, tua cura, palumbes,
Nec gemere aeria cessabit turtur ab ulmo."

ECLOG. I. v. 54, 59.

ART. DCCXVII.

N°. XVIII. *On the ancient English Families.*

" Stat magni nominis umbra." LUCAN.

I CONCEIVE I shall give some variety to my pages, by inserting here a paper, which has lain by me for some years, and which was originally intended to be carried to a much greater length.

The minds of men seem to be recovering from the confusion and poison with which the shallow and vulgar doctrines of equality preached by Tom Paine and his half-witted but base followers, had overset them. It is found that from the unalterable nature of things, distinctions will exist. To modify

them, therefore, in a manner most agreeable to the passions and experience of mankind, is a point of the highest wisdom, because it is essentially conducive to the peace and happiness of society.

In the beautifully-mixed constitution of this country, where the principle of privileged ranks forms an essential part, yet under such limitations, as in general to correct all the abuses to which it may be liable, the study of its practical operations in the history of the rise, prosperity, and decay of the aristocratical branches of our government, is often entertaining, and surely not altogether unimportant. Nor will cursory remarks drawn from a wide, as well as close and continued reflection upon the subject, be considered, perhaps, as totally devoid of interest.

Such remarks will probably remind us of some cautions, which ought never to be forgotten by those who have the distribution of honours. The neglect of them is said to have fomented the rising flames of revolution in France; and Sir Edward Walker testifies, that it added not a little to the cause of similar horrors in this country in the unfortunate reign of Charles I.

While the kingdom continues to grow every day more and more commercial, and sudden wealth falls to the lot of the lowest and most uneducated individuals, it becomes doubly necessary to guard the avenues of distinction, and counteract that powerful influence which gold will always too much command. If all respect be engrossed by riches, who will long pursue the toilsome and ungainful labours

of the mind, or the dangerous and empty laurels of the field?

Records and other authentic documents tell us, that there are many families who for centuries have preserved their names in affluence and honour unsullied by any mean occupation. Have they not been preserved by the wise reverence that the custom of the country has hitherto paid to such advantages of birth? And shall we now laugh at this distinction as a prejudice in favour of a shadow?

But it seems a strange contradiction in the existing age, that while these distinctions are most scoffed at, a spirit of curiosity and inquiry regarding them peculiarly characterizes the present day. County-histories are publishing in every quarter of the kingdom. And even the gorgeous nabob, who bought his mansion but yesterday, accompanies its history with a pompous pedigree. While others, arguing from such abuses, treat every pretension to illustrious birth, as fabulous.

But they, who have examined the subject with a critical and penetrating eye, that can pierce the fabulous dresses, in which vanity or adulation have clothed too many families, must yet have discovered in every part of the kingdom, no small number, who can boast both antiquity and splendour of descent demonstrable by the clearest proofs.

Perhaps our nobility, by their elevated situation, have been more exposed to ruin, than those in a more private and retired situation.

> " Sæpius ventis agitatur ingens
> Pinus; et celsæ graviore casu

Decidunt turres; feriuntque summos
Fulmina montes.*

Dugdale, in the preface to his Baronage published in 1675, says, that "of the two hundred and seventy-five families" [who had their first advancements to the peerage before the end of Henry the Third's reign] "touching which the first volume doth take notice; there will hardly be found above eight, which do to this day continue; and of those not any whose estates (compared with what their ancestors enjoyed) are not a little diminished. Nor of that number (I mean 270) above twenty-four, who are by any younger male branch descended from them, for ought I can discover."

Dugdale has not named the families to which he alluded, but the following are probably the eight, whom he considered to be remaining in the *chief-line* in his time.

I. Percy Earl of Northumberland, since extinct.
II. Vere Earl of Oxford, since extinct.
III. Talbot Earl of Shrewsbury.
IV. Grey Earl of Kent, since extinct.
V. Clinton Earl of Lincoln.
VI. Berkeley Lord Berkeley.
VII. Nevile Lord Abergavenny.
VIII. Hastings Earl of Huntingdon, since extinct.

Of whom it appears that one half have already expired. The twenty-four younger branches then existing I presume to be the following.

* Hor. Od. B. ii. Od. 10.

I. Ferrers of Tamworth, and of Baddesley, Co. Warw. since extinct.

II. Courtnay of Powderham, in Devonshire, now Peers.

III. Byron of Nottinghamshire, now Peers.

IV. Astley of Patshull, in Staffordshire, since extinct; and of Norfolk, now flourishing there, Baronets.

V. Berkeley of Stoke-Gifford, Co. Glouc. and Bruton, Co. Som. both extinct; and of Cotheridge, Co. Worc. since extinct in the male line.

VI. Clavering of Northumberland, now Baronets.

VII. Clifford of Chudleigh, Co. Dev. now Lords Clifford.

VIII. Chaworth of Nottinghamshire, since extinct.

IX. Blount of Sodington, Co. Worc. now Baronets.

X. De Curcy, ancient Irish Peers.

XI. Scrope of Wiltshire, &c. now (I believe) of Castlecomb.

XII. Strange of Hunstanton in Norfolk, since extinct.

XIII. Mohun, of Boconnoc in Cornwall, now extinct.

XIV. St. John* of Bletso, Co. Bedf. and Lydiard-Tregoz, Co. Wilts, both now Peers, by the titles of St. John and Bolingbroke.

* Descended from the St. Johns of Stanton, "*as I guess*," says Dugdale, but it seems clear they were derived from the St. Johns of Basing.

XV. Wake of Blisworth in Northamptonshire, now Baronets.

XVI. D'arcy, Earls of Holdernesse, since extinct.

XVII. Grey of Pirgo, now Earls of Stamford.

XVIII. Corbet of Shropshire; of which name there are some families still subsisting in that county, of which one is of the male line and had lately a patent of Baronetage.

XIX. Gresley, now Baronets of Drakelow, in Derbyshire; descended from Nigel de Stafford, younger son, as supposed, of Robert Baron Stafford, which Nigel held Drakelow at the time of Domesday-Book.

XX. Burgh, who have long been Earls of Clanrickard in Ireland.

XXI. Luttrel of Dunster-Castle, Co. Som. now extinct in the male line, but the heir of the female line has taken the name.

XXII. Warren of Poynton in Cheshire, stated by Dugdale to have been an illegitimate branch, lately extinct.*

XXIII. Stafford of Blatherwick, in Northamptonshire, soon after extinct in the male line, the coheiress marrying Lord Carberry of Ireland.

XXIV. Fitzgerald, now Duke of Leinster, derived from Robert, a younger son of Walter Fitzother, or Windsor, from which stock the Gerards of Lancashire, Gerards

* But Admiral Sir J. B. Warren stated to be a collateral branch.

Bromley, and Brandon, are also derived, and as it seems the Carews and by a natural son the Fitzmaurices Earls of Kerry.*

* Dugdale in his account of the Despensers, Earls of Gloucester, &c. and the Montacutes, Earls of Salisbury, in his first volume of the Baronage, gives no hint of the Earls of Sunderland and Manchester, &c. being derived from younger branches of those great houses. I have not therefore placed them among the twenty-four in the text. Yet it would be injustice to omit the words, with which he prefaces their respective articles in his third volume; though I think this mode of treating them was a gentle intimation of his opinion, or his doubts.

XXV. Under Spenser Earl of Sunderland he says "Of this family which do derive their descent from a younger branch of the antient Barons Spenser, of whom I have in the first volume of this work already spoke, was John Spenser, Esq. (son to John Spenser of Hodenhull, in Co. Warw. as it seems) which John having purchased that great lordship of Wormleighton, situate on the southern part of that county, began the structure of a fair manor-house there in 22 Hen. VII."

'XXVI. Under Lord Montague of Boughton, he says. "Touching that branch of the antient family of Mountagu, whence those who were long since Earls of Salisbury did spring; and which determined in one sole daughter and heir female, having in the first volume of this work already spoke; I come to Edward Mountagu of Hemington, Co. Northampt. Esq. a descendant of another branch thereof; for so it is generally esteemed to be." 'This Edward was knighted and made Chief Justice of the Court of King's Bench 30 Hen. VIII.

Collins, in his Peerage, following such pedigrees as were drawn subsequent to Sir Edward's elevation, makes him the descendant of Simon, youngest brother to John the third Earl of Salisbury. But there has been no authentic proof offered of such a descent. And there is a curious passage in Thorpe's Custumale Roffense, p. 125, under the account of the church of Ludsdowne in Kent. "In the south-chancel of that church is an altar tomb of Caenstone, or brown marble, on which were the effigies and arms of James (whom Dugdale by mistake calls *John*) Montacute, natural son of Thomas

Subsequent investigations can add something to this list upon certain evidence: and more upon very strong probabilities. I am not sure that every younger branch of the once-illustrious family of Zouch was extinct in Dugdale's time.* The

the fourth and last Earl of Salisbury, to whom his father left the manor of Ludsdowne. The arms are quarterly 1st and 4th 3 lozenges in fess for Montacute; 2d and 3d an eagle displayed for Montbermer; over all, a battoon dexter. The battoon, according to Sir John Ferne, Leigh, and other old writers on heraldry, signifies a fourth part of a bend, and was the most ancient and usual mark of illegitimacy. It is even at this day borne by some of the nobility; though afterwards, from the Marshal's Court not being so strict in heraldic matters, and to palliate this mark, a border was substituted in its stead. My father once acquainted his friend John Anstis, Esq. Garter principal king at arms, who was a most excellent genealogist, at the time he was composing his History of the Order of the Garter, of the said tomb and arms; and that the then Duke of Montague could be descended from no other person of the family but the above James. Mr. Anstis was convinced of it, but said the Duke was his very good friend; therefore it would be improper of him to take notice of it in his work. The family now bear the above arms quarterly within a border."

* XXVII. The Percevals claim to be descended from the great House of Lovel: with what truth, I know not.

XXVIII. The royal family of Bruce in Scotland sprung from the baronial family of that name in England, and it seems that the house of Clackmannan, Elgin, &c. in Scotland, are derived from this regal branch, though, according to Crawford's Peerage, antiquaries differ as to the exact mode. Sir Edward Bruce, Earl of Carrick, younger brother of Robert King of Scotland, left only a natural son, on whom the Kingdom bestowed the Earldom of Carrick; but this latter also left only a daughter and heir Helen, who married Sir William Cunningham, &c. but died S. P. Yet Crawford says that the family of Clackmannan are branched from the Earls of Carrick. Certain it is, that King David II. made a grant of the castle and barony of Clackmannan, to Robert Bruce, "dilecto consanguineo suo." There seems no sufficient evidence of the ex-

Spensers, Montagues, Bruces, Finches, Herberts, Bagots, Herons, Mallets, Sackvilles, Tracys, are also deserving of notice.

istence of John Bruce, a younger uncle of King Robert, from whom Collins deduces the present family.

XXIX. There seems to be a considerable probability that the Finches are descended from the baronial family of Fitzherbert, recorded by Dugdale, who slightly mentions the report that the Herberts, Earls of Pembroke, are also so descended.

XXX. The family of Bagot, now peers, do not come strictly within this line; but Hervei Bagot, a younger branch of this family, was of sufficient consequence in the reign of Hen. III. to have married the heiress of Robert Lord Stafford, which name his posterity took, and continued that illustrious family, who became afterwards Dukes of Buckingham, &c.

XXXI. The family of Heron of Chipchase in Northumberland, made Baronets in 1662, and but lately extinct, seem to have been an undoubted branch of the family recorded by Dugdale.

XXXII. The Mallets of Enmore in Somersetshire (whose coheiress married John Wilmot, the celebrated Earl of Rochester, in the time of Charles II.) were undoubtedly of the same family with William Mallet, Baron of Eye, Co. Suff. &c. And if Collinson, in his History of Somersetshire, be accurate, (as he appears in this case to be) from hence is derived Sir Charles Warre Mallet, lately resident in India, created a Baronet Feb. 12, 1791, being son of the Rev. Alexander Mallet, Rector of Combe-Flory, and Preby. of Gloucester, who is stated to be the direct descendant of Richard Malet of St. Audries, by Joane daughter of Richard Warre of Hestercombe, grandson of Baldwin Malet of Curry-poole, solicitor to Hen. VIII. 2d son of Thomas Malet of Enmore, 1498. (Coll. Hist. Som. I. 93.)

XXXIII. According to Collins, Jordan de Sauckville, (collateral ancestor to the Dorset family) is mentioned in a charter of Rich. I. in the Cotton Collections, to be a Baron; and his brother Richard the same. They were at any rate a very considerable family at this time, as the Black-Book of the Exchequer, and other cotemporary evidences prove. They occur in Ordericus Vitalis, as of consequence in Normandy, before the Conquest.

XXXIV. Tracy of Todington, Co. Glouc. who, it seems satisfac-

But though so few have continued in an unbroken male succession to the present, or even to Dugdale's days, yet many more have, through heirs female, laid the foundation of that greatness which families derived from them enjoy. Thus the accumulated honours and property of the great houses of Albini, Moubray, Fitzalan, Warren, &c. have been derived to the splendid family of Howard. Upon the vast feudal property, and noble line, of the families of Tony and Ros, are founded the ducal family of Manners. Through the Ferrerses and Greys of Groby, the great family of Devereux rose into such importance—and through the Devereuxes the Shirleys—through the Neviles, the Fanes—through the family of Chandos, that of Bridges—through the Beauchamps, the Greviles—through the Audleys, the Touchets—through the Someries, the Suttons, Dudleys, and Wards—through the St. Johns (or Ports) the Powletts of Hampshire—through the Despencers, and Neviles, Sir Thomas Stapleton, now a Peer—through the Clintons, Trefusis, now a Peer—through the Cliffords, the Southwells—through the Greys of Wilton, Sir Thomas Egerton, now a peer, by creation. And the Stanleys were augmented by the Stranges of Knockyn—while a great proportion of the estates and some of the honours of the powerful family of Percy are inherited by the heir general, the present Duke of Northumberland: and the blood (and sometimes even part of the property) of by much the largest number of these families, whom Dugdale has recorded in his

torily proved, were derived from a younger son of Sudeley of Sudeley. They were Irish Viscounts, and are very lately extinct.

first volume, has descended by the female line among our nobility and most ancient gentry.

1799.

Art. DCCXVIII.

N°. XIX. *On the conduct of the Censura Literaria.*

"Jactat inæqualem Matho me fecisse libellum,
Si verum est, laudat carmina nostra Matho." Mart.

TO THE RUMINATOR.

SIR,

As I have never yet corresponded with you, I ought perhaps still to have waited till I had something more important to communicate. But as there is no end to procrastination, I embrace the impulse of the moment to send you a paper of scraps and miscellaneous remarks. When a man wanders about in the circles of literature without design, or particular occupation, he hears such jarring opinions, and contradictory dogmas, as to produce nothing but confusion in a mind that is not well-poised. I have for instance heard such opposite judgments regarding the line of conduct which your work ought to pursue, that, if I had not habituated myself to a slow admission of the most plausible sentiments, I should have changed my ideas almost every day. I shall not give way to the observations I could make either on those who would admit nothing but black-letter, and the rarest books; or on those who will endure nothing but modern matter. It would be easy to indulge some just sarcasm on both; but I forbear. The truth is, Sir, that

wisdom and genius depend not on ancient or modern phraseology. The narrow mind, which confines them to either, deserves a name, which I will not give it.

All the fashionable artifices of writing which the mob cannot distinguish from real merit, are the meteors of a day. Genius shines with a steady light through the mists and disguises of time. Conversant as your pursuits must make you, not only with those productions which have survived the wreck of ages, but with those works, which, though now forgotten, possessed a temporary reputation, you would do well to exert those critical powers, which I fear you are too apt to neglect, in analysing the qualities, which have tended to insure a permanent favour. Do not put yourself on a par with collectors, who waste their time and money in running after what is merely rare! You well know, that, in nine cases out of ten, its rarity arises from its want of merit!

With regard to your Essays, I hear it remarked, that they are not sufficiently confined to subjects of literature; or of a nature sufficiently consonant with the primary purpose of your work. And I must admit that there is some justice in the remark. Yet I endeavour to plead for you, that these censurers are a little too severe. I ask if any thing, which attempts to develope niceties of the poetical character can be deemed foreign to the views of such a publication. I ask them to point out to me more than two papers in all your Ruminators, which do not involve some literary topics. And when I press them hard, I find that their main ob-

jections are founded on a misconception of your original plan.

I have no hesitation to say, that whenever you have departed from that plan it has been for the worse. You begun with criticism, and composition, and a rational mixture of English literature, both ancient and modern. You ought never to have descended to rival mere collectors, and makers of catalogues! The contempt between you will be mutual. You may rely on it, that, if you cannot trace the history of some black-letter penny pamphlet as well as they can, till it ends in some lucky possessor at the price of ten guineas, they will feel a sovereign scorn both for your knowledge and your genius! They will every where express their wonder at the impudence of a man, who has not been seen bidding madly for rare articles at every book-sale for the last five years, presuming to write on subjects of our ancient literature.

And do you suppose that, if you plead your love of the Muse, it will avail you at all? What signifies it to them, if you lose the long day in woodland solitudes, dreaming of the splendour of past ages, realising in your fancy all the glories of the times of chivalry, and marshalling the Fairy Knights of Spenser in golden visions? These occupations will not enable you to tell the peculiar marks, or minute variations of a *liber rariss.* or help you in the wonderful discovery of an unknown *Caxton!* Do not give heed to the exploded doctrine that to criticise a poet requires something of congenial feeling. A collector, it seems, can do it well; but, no doubt, a maker of catalogues can do it best of all!!

But still, Sir, you must not be dismayed. They, who are not within the reach of this sale-mania, have other rules of judging; they expect occasional remarks on the intrinsic merits of the pieces registered, which you perhaps may be a little better qualified for, than some of these title-page-dealers! but which I am sorry to say that you yourself, either from indolence, or some other cause, which you ought not to indulge, too much neglect. You appear to have given way to many things contrary to your better taste; and to have suffered yourself to be led out of the path, of which you had the command, into others, where you have many superiors, and still more rivals.

Consider no original remarks on any part of literature foreign to your purpose; exercise those arts of composition, for which your nature and habits have qualified you; and do not lower yourself to a level with transcribers, and mere bibliographers. Though a few London book-worms may not like your work so well, be assured the public will like it much better.

While I thus indulge in unsought advice to you, I cannot refrain from touching on another point. Among all the periodical publications, which have any concern with criticism, there is one which characterizes yours, and which I warn you to preserve. You stand independent; you are known to be actuated only by a pure and disinterested love of your subject; and you stand free therefore from all suspicion of sophistry, and corrupt praise or blame. If you take a single step, or enter into a single connection, which will destroy that confidence, your

work is lost. Whoever differs from you now, knows at least that the opinions you convey to the public are honest.

Since the days of Ritson, there has been a fashion of admitting claims to a high reputation on the mere grounds of industry, without a particle of taste, or feeling; and still less of genius!—Were the materials of Ritson transferred to another work, every thing would be transferred: transfer all the materials of Warton, and the best part of him still remains! Do not therefore run a race with such men as Ritson; but exert your own faculties; and we care not whether the book you write upon, is thirty or three hundred years old! But you are idle, very idle! You seem never to write, except when your feelings are touched:

"Facit indignatio versum!"

It has been often observed, that there are many little functions in literature level to very common capacities, and acquirements; but of which the public will not easily endure the performance by any but those who are qualified to do better things. It will not easily suffer persons to enter the domains of Parnassus, and adorn themselves with faded flowers, which have been reared, and cropped, and thrown away by their superiors! It generally turns with neglect from such pretenders!

Let me entreat you then to rely upon yourself; move "right onward" unfatigued and undismayed; throw your mind upon your page; give us more such articles as those on the Douglas Cause; and do not be persuaded that it is a mere question rela-

tive to a single family, of which all the interest has long since faded away. As long as it is curious to balance moral probabilities, and develope the hidden movements of human conduct; as long as it is instructive to study the display of all the powers of many strong and cultivated minds on those principles of evidence, which have been among the primary objects of their professional labours, such discussions must abound both with amusement and information!

SENEX.

Oct. 31, 1807.

P. S. As this is a miscellaneous paper, permit me to enclose the following lines by a young friend, for insertion in your pages.

Written at Barnard Castle, Co. Durham, in December 1803.

" The rising sun for me in vain
Arrays in gold the mountain's crest;
And gleaming o'er the humid plain,
With crimson tinges Ocean's breast:
His spreading beams, though rob'd in light,
No more their wonted joys bestow;
They cannot chace the eternal night,
That clouds my soul with endless woe.

The promise of my youth is fled;
The life-blood curdles round my heart;
The opening buds of Hope are shed;
And death alone can ease impart.
Ah! why did Heav'n impress my mind
With feelings still to rapture true;
Yet leave unpitying Fate to bind
Affection's germs with funeral yew.

The starry eve, the new-born day,
Alike have lost their power to charm;
Nor can e'en Beauty's proud display
Again this frozen bosom warm:
Clos'd is my heart to all but HER,
Who first awoke its slumb'ring fires;
Whose image all my thoughts prefer,
And will, till life itself expires."

To this the Editor takes the opportunity of adding the following Sonnet by a friend, written immediately after reading "*The Wild Irish Girl.*"

"Oh! had my soul, when first, with wild hope fill'd,
And Love's delusions, danc'd my awaken'd heart,
As Beauty's witchery did its spells impart;
Oh! had my soul, when every feeling thrill'd
With new-born joys that fate too quickly kill'd,
Met thee, Glorvina, and with thee been blest!
My days had flown caressing and caress'd,
And every anxious throb been sweetly still'd.

The airy harp had sooth'd my bosom's woe;
And as thy wild notes swell'd the trembling strings,
Rapture's full chord had taught my heart to glow
With grateful incense to the KING OF KINGS!
But Heav'n forbade! and soon must sorrow's gloom
Enshroud its victim in the silent tomb."

October 30, 1807.

ART. DCCXIX.

N°. XX. *On the Sonnets of Milton, with a translation of one of his Italian Sonnets.*

"——— Sed ille
Si foret hoc nostrum fato dilatus in ævum,
Detereret sibi multa." HOR.

THERE are few persons, I presume, among those who are in the habit of exercising their mental faculties, exempt from occasionally suffering an unconquerable lassitude and imbecility, the effect perhaps of over-exertion, and often of great anxiety and fatigue. On such occasions the assistance of eminent friends, which is at all times highly acceptable, becomes doubly gratifying. It is therefore with more than common satisfaction, that at a moment when my spirits are low, and my humble talents more than commonly weak, I am enabled to communicate a very excellent translation of an Italian Sonnet of Milton by the learned and poetic editor of that poet's *Paradise Regained.*

Milton's Fourth Sonnet, "Diodati, io te'l diro," &c. Translated from the Italian.

"Yes, Diodati, wonderful to tell,
Ev'n I—the stubborn wretch, who erst despis'd
The God of Love, and laugh'd his chains to scorn,
Am fall'n, where oft the brave have captur'd been.
Nor golden tresses, nor the vermeil cheek,
Are my resistless victors. A new form
Of foreign beauty fascinates my soul:
That nobly graceful portance; those smooth brows
Arch'd with the lustrous gloss of loveliest black;
That converse sweet, with various tongues adorn'd;
That song, whose charming potency might well
Draw down the labouring moon from her high path,
But 'gainst whose magic strains to close the ear,
Avails not,—while those radiant eyes beam fire."*

C. D. [illegible]

* This was written near two years ago, under an idea that in

THERE seems to my ear a kind of stately Miltonic movement in these verses, which makes the want of rhyme unperceived.

In my humble judgment, the Sonnets of Milton, however condemned by the malignant sarcasms of Johnson, though I will not say they are among the best of his compositions, partake almost every where of the majestic plainness of his lofty genius. For seven and twenty years they have been the objects of my admiration; and I do not like them the less, because they are deficient in all the finical prettinesses of modern poetry. When I hear of their harsh and bald deformities, I only smile with scorn at the tasteless inability to discern in them the spirit of an exalted mind above the artifices of a tinsel dress.

I have already given my opinion in the memoir of Dr. Darwin, and elsewhere, of those narrow notions of poetry, which too many indulge. They seem to think it confined to sparkling images, to pointed expressions, and harmonious rhymes. Even the best of these ingredients is of very inferior importance to that sublimity or tenderness of soul, which has the power of communicating its own strong impressions to the reader. He who busies himself with the tricks of language, is never hurried away by the fire of natural thoughts.

A manly mind hates all the minor machinery of poetical composition, though it be the only part

translating a sonnet from the Italian, if you keep pretty close to the original thoughts and expressions, it may be made more readable in blank verse than by cramping it into the correspondent rhymes of the legal sonnet. C. D.

which a feeble or vitiated critic comprehends or relishes. But yet how contemptible is he, who in the boundless varieties of the human intellect, and the boundless space over which it may travel, would confine our judgments to one or two models of excellence! If Spenser, and Shakspeare, and Milton were poets, so were Cowley and Dryden; yet how unlike! Where then is to be found the definition of poetry large enough to comprehend its powers?

Of all the Sonnets of Milton, I am almost inclined to prefer the XIXth, *On his Blindness.* It has, to my weak taste, such various excellences, as I am unequal to praise sufficiently. It breathes doctrines at once so sublime and consolatory, as to gild the gloomy paths of our existence here with a new and singular light.

Of Milton's harshness, may it not be observed, that originality often appears like harshness? Common-place phrases seem smooth, because we are habituated to them, while a new combination of words sounds rough to our ears. How far from harsh are those fine lines in the XIVth Sonnet to the memory of Mrs. Thomson, where he says,

> " Thy works and alms ——————
> Staid not behind, nor in the grave were trod;
> —Love led them on, and Faith who knew them best,
> Thy handmaids, clad them o'er with purple beams
> And azure wings——————"

And then closes by saying that " the Judge"

> " —————— thenceforth bid thee rest,
> And drink thy fill of pure immortal streams!"

How majestic is the flow of those vigorous lines in

his Address to Cromwell, when he speaks of him as "the chief of men, who

"To peace and truth thy glorious way hast plough'd,
And on the neck of crowned Fortune proud
Hast rear'd God's trophies, and his works pursued,
While Darwen stream with blood of Scots imbrued,
And Dunbar field resounds thy praises loud,
And Worcester's laureat wreath."——

The study of these Sonnets would suggest a chaster and more classical style to our modern poetasters and critics. But perhaps without his strength of thought such plainness would not be endured.

Dec. 20, 1807.

Art. DCCXX.

N°. XXI. *On Dreams.*

"Observe you not sometimes, that you wake out of quite a different sort of world, from that to which your days are accustomed? On your efforts to grasp them by recollection the thin ideas shrink away, and in a few moments are quite vanished."

Miss Talbot's Essays.

The operations of the mind in sleep have never yet been explained in any manner the least satisfactory. Numerous have been the disquisitions* on the subject; but none seem to approach to a clear elucidation of it. Our dreams are sometimes made up of materials, which have employed our waking

* Baxter's Theory is very interesting and at least plausible. Beattie's Essay on the subject has, I think, been more commended than it deserves.

thoughts; but they are frequently compounded of ideas and images which have no apparent connection with the previous occupation of the brains. But the degree of vividness with which objects impress themselves on the intellect, during slumber, seems so far beyond the powers of memory or fancy, as to be almost of a different kind. No voluntary effort of the imagination in its most brilliant moments can bring before its view forms and scenes so distinct and forcible as a dream constantly produces.

No part of this astonishing power of the human faculties is more extraordinary than the alternate character which the same mind can thus take on those occasions; when it can carry on a dialogue or argument between contending parties, and assume successively the strength of each, with no more power of anticipating the other's reply than would happen in reality. How this rapid shifting of character, so much more full of life, than any waking talent can effect, is caused, must be left for our dim knowledge to wonder at in vain!

What scenes of stupendous splendour have I seen in my dreams! What more than mortal music has thrilled on my senses! My sluggish fancy cannot even catch a glimpse of these visions by day; and I try in vain to recall the tones of the heavenly harmony that I have thus heard.

Perhaps it is owing to this acute employment of the intellect in sleep, that its sensibility seems more tender at first waking, than when the body, worn out with fatigue, was consigned to rest. Subjects of regret and sorrow, which had been quieted, before we closed our eyes at night, return, as the morning

rouses us, with a double sting. When I go to sleep with an aching heart, the moment of my grief that I most dread, is when I first wake. Then it is that the painful object of my suffering or my fears shews itself to my tremulous nerves in all its horrors.

It was thus that I suddenly waked in the depth of night, not long ago, with the impression of poignant regret at having neglected to make proper returns to the flattering attention of a friend. How my conscience had thus worked, while my body was reposing, I know not; but I endeavoured to soothe myself to quiet again by recording the occurrence in the following Sonnet.

Sonnet to a Friend. Written at midnight, Dec. 13. 1807.

Methought I heard thy voice, when sunk in sleep,
High-sounding thro' still Midnight's silence drear;
"Why mute, thou son of song! Why meets my ear
No effort of that tongue, which wont to keep
Its airy course, o'er every bar and steep
Thro' intellectual realms? No more I hear
Thy plaintive notes, to feeling bosoms dear,
Nor Indignation pour his tones more deep!"
Thereat I trembling woke; and still the sound
Quiver'd upon my nerves; I seiz'd the lyre,
And strove to make its untun'd strings rebound
With strains congenial to its former fire!
But thus I prove, by these insipid lays,
The object worthless of thy generous praise?

It must not be admitted then that the hours spent in sleep are all lost; it is at those times that the mind is often employed with the most activity; and

I do not doubt that many important hints and bright inventions have first arisen, when the body was in that state of quiescence.

Art. DCCXXI.

N°. XXII. *On Books.*

" Quæ sunt igitur epularum, aut ludorum aut scortorum voluptates cum his voluptatibus comparandæ?" Cic.

Are books, in truth, a dead letter? To those who have no bright mirror in their own bosoms to reflect their images, they are! But the lively and active scenes, which they call forth in well-framed minds, exceed the liveliness of reality. Heads and hearts, of a coarser grain, require the substance of material objects to put them in motion.

Books instruct us calmly, and without intermingling with their instruction any of those painful impressions of superiority, which we must necessarily feel from a living instructor. They wait the pace of each man's capacity; stay for his want of perception, without reproach; go backward and forward with him at his wish; and furnish inexhaustible repetitions.

How is it possible to express what we owe, as intellectual beings, to the art of printing! When a man sits in a well-furnished library, surrounded by the collected wisdom of thousands of the best endowed minds, of various ages and countries, what an amazing extent of mental range does he command!

Every age, and every language, has some advan-

tages, some excellencies peculiar to itself. I am not sure, that skill in a variety of tongues is always wisdom; but an acquaintance with various forms of expression, and the operations and results of minds at various times, and under various circumstances of climate, manners, and government, must necessarily enrich and strengthen our opinions.

A person, who is only conversant with the literature of his own country, and that, during only the last ten or twenty years, contracts so narrow a taste, that every other form of phrase, or mode of composition, every other fashion of sentiment, or intellectual process, appears to him repulsive, dull, and worthless. He reads Spenser, and Milton, if he reads them at all, only as a task; and he turns with disgust from the eloquence of Sydney, Hooker, and Jeremy Taylor. The black letter, and coarse and dingy paper, are forbidding; and he flies from the amusing detail, and interesting naiveté of lord Berners, and the copious particulars of Holinshead, to the vapid translations of Voltaire, and the flimsy and superficial pages of Hume.

The weakly appetites of these literary flies excite contempt. The sterling sense of our ancestors is reviving; Elizabethan * libraries are forming; old books are rescued from the stalls, and the pastry-

* Among the first of these is Mr. Heber, of Hodnet in Shropshire, and Marton Hall in Yorkshire, a man of ancient family and large fortune, whose spirit and industry in collecting deserves national praise; and whose truly brilliant talents and incredible extent of knowledge, which enable him to penetrate and devour the books which he collects, must necessarily extort the unbounded admiration of every one, who has the opportunity of conversing with him.

cooks, to be preserved for the inspection of a liberal curiosity; and the booksellers have, with praiseworthy enterprise, begun to reprint Holinshead, and others of our ancient historians. Mr. Walter Scott, by a singularly happy talent of extracting lively and entertaining matter even from the dullest volumes, has materially contributed to this growing fashion.

They, whose reading has been confined to the productions of their own day, consider the language of Lord Clarendon, with his "periods of a mile," to eclipse the excellence of his matter: they cannot seek information through so disagreeable and tedious a medium. To those, whose acquaintance with books is more extensive, his style is as familiar as that of Robertson, Gibbon, or even Hume; and of infinitely more interest and eloquence, than any of those historians ever reached.

Perhaps the best prose writer in the English tongue lived in the reigns of Charles I. and Charles II. This was Cowley the poet. And I am inclined to place another poet next to him; the immortal Dryden! I would give the third place to Addison; and the fourth to Burke; whose similarity, in some points, to Dryden, has been well remarked by Malone.*

Were it not for the opposition of lights drawn from different ages, the human mind would yield itself to temporary errors of the most alarming nature. Absurdities would be repeated through folly

* Scotland must forgive me for agreeing with Cowper and Sir William Jones, about Robertson. The prose of Burns is often excellent.

or interest, till, if nothing stood upon record to detect them, they would be believed; and the deviation from sound taste, and sound sense, not only in language, but opinion, would be infinite.

Above all, there is this value in books, that they enable us to converse with the dead. There is something in this beyond the mere intrinsic worth of what they have left us. When a person's body is mouldering, cold, and insensible, in the grave, we feel a sacred sentiment of veneration for the living memorials of his mind.

Jan. 22, 1808.

Art. DCCXXII.

N°. XXIII. *On Mrs. Carter's Letters.*

" Sermo oritur non de villis domibusve alienis;
Nec mel necne lepos saltet; sed quid magis ad nos
Pertinet, et nescire malum est, agitamus." Hor.

The Collections of Letters of eminent literary characters, which have been given to the public within the last ten years, have added materially to the stock of innocent and instructive amusement. An accession to this stock has just been announced, by a notice of the publication of Select Parts of the Correspondence of Mrs. Elizabeth Carter. The world, if I mistake not, will be as much delighted by her eloquence, and beauty of language, as by her strength of mind and fervour of piety; while those who admire a more playful manner, joined to an equal warmth of religion, and purity of conduct, will perhaps be still more pleased with those of her

correspondent, Mrs. Katherine Talbot, which will appear with them. In the latter years of Mrs. Carter's life, the colour of her pen became still more uniformly serious, as is proved by her letters to Mrs. Vesey. I could not refrain from soliciting the permission, which a spare hour would allow me to embrace, of making the following extracts, from the MSS. in the hands of my dear friend the Editor: conceiving I should gratify the public by this slight anticipation.

Extracts from Mrs. Carter's Letters to Mrs. Vesey.

Aug. 21, 1776.

"We were both exceedingly disappointed at your rejection of our darling scheme of Walmer Castle. But I suspect it is Mrs. H—'s fault. She probably represented it to you merely as a pleasant dwelling, where you might eat your dinner, and drink your tea and coffee, like the fashion of any modern house. If she had told you that some discontented Spectre walked its melancholy round every night along the grass-grown platform, the attraction would have been irresistible to your curiosity. I think she might possibly have succeeded even if she had been contented to describe the operations of elementary beings upon the ancient structure. She might have told you how the Spirits of the air talk in whistling winds through its battlements, and how the Angel of the waters dashes the roaring billows at its foot. Instead of alluring you by these sublime ideas, I suspect she dwelt chiefly on the pleasure you would confer upon a couple of mere too-legged

human creatures; upon which you turned about and said, 'Why, Mrs. Haddcock, we can meet enough of these upon the pantiles,' and so the die turned up for Tunbridge; for which we are very sorry that your vixen countrywoman did not beat you."

"Oct. 13, 1776.

"Though I cannot claim even an acquaintance with Mr. S. Jenyns, I must defend him, though I had much rather he would have prevented any attack, by such an explication as would have rendered it less possible to mistake his meaning: yet even as it now stands, he seems to have sufficiently discovered that he cashiers no other valour than that which from false and wicked ideas of honour and glory stabs individually and desolates whole nations: no other friendship but such an exclusive affection as subverts general benevolence; and no other patriotism but such as serves for a mask to ambition, and from the influence of private passions tends to throw the state into discord and confusion. Mr. Jenyns in the consideration of not loading the attention of those, whom he chiefly meant to benefit by his book, has too often expressed himself with a conciseness which renders his meaning obscure."

"Deal, Dec. 2, 1776.

"I am obliged to you for the concern you express on the subject of our late shock. Perhaps you may have felt an earthquake: if not, I am not inclined to wish for one *a votre intention*; but as it past happily over, I have often wished you had been

with Monty * and me on Thursday morning. I have felt one before; but it was nothing compared to this. Never did I experience so sublime an effect of the voice of the Hand of Omnipotence. This awful exertion was mercifully checked within the boundary that marks destruction: but I should think its continuance for a few more seconds must have produced fatal effects. It seemed as if the pillars of heaven, and foundations of earth were all convulsed. The wild tumult and hurry of the elements were as much beyond all description as the confusion of my thoughts; for I had no explicit idea till I was awakened to a more distinct sense by Monty's hastily uttering "an earthquake!"

"Dec. 4, 1777.

"It did indeed give me all the pleasure you could wish or suppose, my dear Mrs. Vesey, to receive a letter from you in such a style of chearful tranquillity and comfortable hopes. My heart must and will feel your absence with many a tender regret this winter: but it would be much less supportable, if I had not the happiness to consider it as a consequence of your acting in a manner conformable to your obligations. On this solid rock we may stand, and look forward with unallayed pleasure to the prospect of our next meeting, when I trust we shall enjoy our delightful parties with a spirit unclouded by any of those uneasy reflections, which must cast a gloom over the brightest sunshine of life, whenever inclination is preferred

* Her nephew Montagu Pennington.

to duty. *En attendant* the more active pleasures of our social hours, may the best and most important reflections tranquillize your mind, the happiest recollections of friendship soothe your heart, and the brightest visions of poetical imagination vary and enliven your solitude; and give spirit as well as sentiment to your tete a tetes with dear Mrs. Handcock!

"Miss Sharpe commissions me to assure you both of her love; and I know very few people whose love is less lightly given. We wished for you extremely last night in my little airy abode, round which all the elements play with the most uninterrupted liberty: for happily I am not in a town, but at the end of it. You would have enjoyed the solemn concert; to which by a chearful fire we listened with so much rapture. The whistling wind, the beating rain, and dashing waves, ushered in that winter, which has been so long delayed: for November has been gilded by the smiles of May. There has scarcely been a day in which the airings we have taken did not furnish us with some beautiful view. I wish you could accompany us. I think you would be pleased with the country. It has one advantage beyond any I ever recollect to have seen: the charming variety of the ground, and the intersection of the hills, sometimes opening a view to the sea, sometimes to a shaded village, and sometimes a solitary cottage, which seems retired to an infinite distance from the rest of the habitable world!"

" Deal, June 7, 1777.

" It is quite uncomfortable to me, my dear Mrs. Vesey, to find you are still detained in London, which in its present desertion must appear like a solitude haunted by the ghosts of all your departed friends. The misfortune too is, that amidst the avocations of disagreeable mere mortal business of preparing for a journey, they can only just glide by you, and give you no idea but of their loss. When you are quietly reposing in the shades of Lucan, your imagination will be at full leisure to stop the fleeting phantoms, and converse with them at your ease.

" You say that Mr. Vesey still talks of returning after Christmas. If he should continue in this determination, I hope you will not put any discouragement on this near hope, for the sake of a more distant prospect. Consider, my dear friend, that at your age and mine, the more immediate good is the most valuable; and we can reasonably place but little dependance on any remote hopes, except those which extend beyond the circuit of the sun. I take it for granted that by *after Christmas* Mr. Vesey means *immediately after:* for your friends would think themselves grievously defrauded, if you did not visit them till spring. No: I must hope, my dear Mrs. Vesey, that we shall enjoy the delightful social hours of winter together; not like the soi disant philosophers whom you mention, puzzling plain truth by the vanity of perplexed system, but conversing with the simplicity of an honest heart, regulated by rigid principles, and enlivened by the playfulness of an innocent imagination!

"I am flattered to find that I agree with Mr. Burke. Yes: ask your own heart; and it will tell you, what is the rule of life that best directs it to grow wise and good. Be thankful for this gracious guidance and never listen to the half *learning*, the perverted understanding, and pert ridicule of French philosophers, and beaux esprits, who would persuade you it is best to wander over a wide stormy ocean, without a pilot, and without a leading star!"

Art. DCCXXIII.

N°. XXIV. *On the Pleasures of Reading.*

"While fancy, like the finger of a clock,
Runs the great circuit, and is still at home."

COWPER.

The contempt of many of the innocent trifles of life, which the generality of the world betray, arises from the weakness and narrowness, and not from the superiority, of their understandings. Most of the empty baubles, which mankind pursue as objects of high consideration, are suffered to eclipse those simple amusements which are in no respect less important, and which are so far more valuable as they are more compatible with purity of heart and conduct!

It is from an undue estimate of the points of ordinary ambition, that health, liberty, carelessness of mind, and ease of conscience, are sacrificed to the attainment of distinctions, which in the opinion of the truly wise are mere vanity. A just appreciation on the contrary will deem every pursuit, that af-

fords amusement without derogating from virtue, praiseworthy.

Of all the human relaxations which are free from guilt, perhaps there is none so dignified as reading. It is no little good to while away the tediousness of existence in a gentle and harmless exercise of the intellectual faculties. If we build castles in the air that vanish as quickly as the passing clouds, still some beneficial result has been obtained; some hours of weariness have been stolen from us; and probably some cares have been robbed of their sting.

I do not here mean to discuss the scale of excellence among the various studies that books afford. It is my purpose to shew that even the most trifling books, which give harmless pleasure, produce a good far exceeding what the world ascribes to more high-sounding occupations.

When we recollect of how many it is the lot, even against choice, to pass their days in solitude, how admirable is the substitute for conversation, which the powers of genius and arts of printing bestow!

I have made these observations for the purpose of introducing the following very excellent Letter of Lady Mary Wortly Montagu to her daughter, Lady Bute.

"Louvre, Sept. 30, 1757.

"Daughter! Daughter! don't call names; you are always abusing my pleasures, which is what no mortal will bear. Trash, lumber, sad stuff, are the titles you give to my favourite amusement. If I

called a white staff a stick of wood, a gold key gilded brass, and the ensigns of illustrious orders coloured strings, this may be philosophically true, but would be very ill received. We have all our playthings; happy are they that can be contented with those they can obtain: those hours are spent in the wisest manner that can easiest shade the ills of life, and are the least productive of ill consequences. I think my time better employed in reading the adventures of imaginary people, than the Duchess of Marlborough, who passed the latter years of her life in paddling with her will, and contriving schemes of plaguing some, and extracting praise from others to no purpose; eternally disappointed, and eternally fretting. The active scenes are over at my age. I indulge, with all the art I can, my taste for reading. If I could confine it to valuable books, they are almost as rare as valuable men. I must be content with what I can find. As I approach a second childhood, I endeavour to enter into the pleasures of it. Your youngest son is, perhaps, at this very moment riding on a poker with great delight, not at all regretting that it is not a gold one, and much less wishing it an Arabian horse, which he could not know how to manage. I am reading an idle tale, not expecting wit or truth in it, and am very glad it is not metaphysics to puzzle my judgment, or history to mislead my opinion: he fortifies his health by exercise; I calm my cares by oblivion. The methods may appear low to busy people, but if he improves his strength, and I forget my infirmities, we both attain very desirable ends."

In a prior letter, 1752, Lady Mary says, "I yet retain, and carefully cherish my love of reading. If relays of eyes were to be hired like post-horses, I would never admit any but silent companions: they afford a constant variety of entertainment, which is almost the only one pleasing in the enjoyment, and inoffensive in the consequence."

Again, 1753. "Every woman endeavours to breed her daughter a fine lady, qualifying her for a station in which she will never appear; and at the same time incapacitating her for that retirement, to which she is destined. Learning, if she has a real taste for it, will not only make her contented, but happy in it. No entertainment is so cheap as reading, nor any pleasure so lasting. She will not want new fashions, nor regret the loss of expensive diversions, or variety of company, if she can be amused with an author in her closet."

I am well aware that a rigid censor may blame this view of things exhibited by lady Mary as too limited, and exclaim, in the beautiful words of Mrs. Carter, addressed to another of her own name:

"How short a period, how confin'd a space,
Must bound thy shining course beneath the skies?
For wider glories, for immortal fame,
Were all those talents, all those graces, given?"

But let it be remembered, that I have not compared the occupations of idle reading with the duties pointed out by religion; but only with the pursuits

of worldly ambition. And surely of those who thus employ themselves it may well be said with Gray;

"Beneath the good how far, yet far above the great!"*

Art. DCCXXIV.

N°. XXV. *How far History is true.*

"History is philosophy, teaching by example."
BOLINGBROKE, from DION HALI.

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE said to his son Horace, who, with a view to amuse him, was preparing to read some historical performance, "O, do not read history, for that I know must be false!" This is a most extraordinary assertion, which exhibits the narrowness of the minister's mind in very glaring colours. Coxe says he had little taste for literary occupations, and was not a patron of the Muses. He employed low persons to write for government, in consequence of which the political pamphlets in his defence are far inferior to the productions of his adversaries. Hence his administration often suffered

* We may perhaps apply to idle reading what Lord Clarendon records as the opinion of James Hay, Earl of Carlisle, as to a life of pleasure in opposition to a life of business. "He was," says the noble historian, "a man of the greatest expense in his own person of any in the age he lived; and introduced more of that expense in the excess of clothes and diet, than any other man; and was indeed the original of all those inventions, from which others did but transcribe copies. He had a great universal understanding, and could have taken as much delight in any other way, if he had thought any other as pleasant and worth his care. *But he found business was attended with more rivals and vexations; and he thought with much less pleasure, and not more innocence.*"

in the public opinion, when, as has happened since to others, his measures only wanted an able exposition to make them popular.

All that Walpole knew of history were the lying party productions of the day; for which he knew that the materials were garbled or false, and the reasonings fallacious. But Time draws away the veil, that conceals the form of Truth; and it is probable that we have now a more perfect and comprehensive view of public affairs in the reigns of Queen Elizabeth, James the First, and Charles the First, than the most able and best informed actors in those scenes ever possessed. We are more minutely and more correctly acquainted with them, than Burleigh, or Salisbury, or Clarendon. The secrets of Cabinets are laid open; the private objects of both sides are exposed; and the hidden springs of action are discovered.

But it is a strong argument in favour of the credit due to the historian of integrity and talents, even when he has performed his task without all these aids, that the subsequent publication of State Papers has seldom materially varied the main features of his work. Thus the general fidelity of Camden's account of the reign of Queen Elizabeth remains unimpeached. And this is the case also with Lord Herbert's History of Henry VIII.

The portraits of individuals, drawn by the pens of these writers, have seldom been proved by future lights to be essentially erroneous. The capricious tyranny of Henry; the unfeminine strength and heroism of his daughter; the unprincipled cunning and artifices of Leicester; the imprudent and too

confident impetuosity of Essex; and the wary and laborious wisdom of Burleigh, have never been more truly delineated. Even those who have looked through the medium of opposite political principles, have agreed in the same great outlines of portraits; and Arthur Wilson, the puritan, paints his principal characters in colours not inconsistent with those of Clarendon. The noble limner indeed makes his touches with a far finer and more exquisite pencil; and exhibits all the foldings and windings of his subject with inexpressible skill and happiness; but we plainly see the same figure before both draughtsmen, and are therefore sure that it is accurate.

It ought to be an incentive to virtue in public men, that neither titles nor power will long be able to disguise the truth. A lucky and undeserved elevation will only expose a man more obviously to the scrutiny of impartial posterity. Sir Robert Walpole now holds the exact place in history, which he merits: he is no longer injured by the discredit or the weakness of his defenders; nor depressed by the brilliant eloquence or splendid stations of his opponents. His practical wisdom; his strong, though coarse understanding; his dexterity in the management of business, and in allaying the heats of party; his firmness in cultivating the arts of peace, and benefits of commerce, in defiance of clamour, a a critical period when the exigencies of the kingdom in the state of European politics made such a line of conduct a choice of real wisdom, have been justly eulogized by Burke, and detailed by the eminently useful labours of Coxe.

It may seem of little consequence to us, what is

said when our mortal relics are sleeping in the grave. But though "flattery" cannot "soothe the dull cold ear of death," the report of the truth may perhaps delight or torment our departed spirits, accordingly as it is good or evil.

Yet whatever be the import to the dead, to the living the knowledge of the truth is certainly of consequence. All the wisdom, which is supposed to be built on experience, stands on a rotten foundation, if the pages of history are falsified. If the real state of facts be mistaken or concealed, what certainty is there in the deductions which are extracted from them?

It becomes a matter therefore of a very serious nature, to those who study the actions and progress of mankind in society, to vindicate the integrity and accuracy of history.

Art. DCCXXV.

N°. XXVI. *On Imprisonment for Debt.*

——"Hither then,
Ye sons of pity, and ye sons of thought,
Whether by public zeal, and patriot love,
Or by compassion's gentle stirring wrought,
O hither come!"

DODD'S THOUGHTS IN PRISON.

The short debate, which took place on Friday the 11th of March 1808, on Lord Moira's Motion for the Second Reading of the Debtor and Creditor Bill, forces from me a few observations, which, though they will contain nothing new, cannot be too often repeated. Lord Moira deserves the thanks of every

lover of philanthropy and extended policy, and will, I trust, persevere with a continuance of hope, "even though hope be lost." It is a bad symptom of the times, that such arguments, as were used against him, should prevail. Though it be dangerous to level to the ground, and build anew, and though rash innovation ought to be avoided, yet it is a contemptible narrowness to go to the contrary extreme, and refuse every *amelioration*.

It would be presumptuous to attempt to add new force to the arguments of Dr. Johnson, to which Lord Holland so handsomely referred. The *Idler* is a work of too general circulation to require a reference to the subject which the great moralist has discussed, or to copy many of its passages. But there is a part so directly applicable as a reply to the arguments of a noble Lord, that even from this common book I cannot refrain from repeating a few sentences of such inexpressible importance.

"To the relief of this distress, no other objection can be made, but that by an easy dissolution of debts, fraud will be left without punishment and imprudence without awe, and that, when insolvency shall be no longer punishable, credit will cease.

"The motive to credit is the hope of advantage. Commerce can never be at a stop, while one man wants what another can supply; and credit will never be denied, while it is likely to be repaid with profit. He, that trusts one, whom he designs to sue, is criminal by the act of trust; the cessation of such insidious traffic is to be desired, and no reason can be given, why a change of the law should impair any other. We see nation trade with nation, where

no payment can be compelled. Mutual convenience produces mutual confidence; and the merchants continue to satisfy the demands of each other, though they have nothing to dread but the loss of trade. It is vain to continue an institution, which experience shews to be ineffectual. We have now imprisoned one generation of debtors after another, but we do not find that their numbers lessen. We have now learned that rashness and imprudence will not be deterred from taking credit! Let us try, whether fraud and avarice may be more easily restrained from giving it!" *

It has been often observed, that the same violence, the same indiscriminate view of things, which, when out of power, attacks every thing, when in power, defends *any* thing. The philosophy of legislation is indeed a far different and loftier attainment, than that technical skill which applies with tolerable correctness that which has been enacted. How wofully do men expose the narrowness of their intellectual faculties and acquirements, when they venture beyond the file of authorities, into the expanded field of principles! It belongs to the few, to whom nature has been more prodigal, to unite the mastery of both.

Many things, which have been long established, are indeed founded on better reasons than we may at first perceive: and the annihilation of them would perhaps create chasms and inconveniencies, not foreseen. But, on the other hand, it is perfectly ludicrous to suppose that every thing has arrived at perfection,

* See the Idler, No. 22 and No. 38.

and that no amelioration in any part of our ancient institutions is requisite. Many corruptions have gradually grown up with the progress of time: and many provisions have long outlasted their causes—and though originally wise, are become, by change of circumstances, highly injurious. Are we to be such bigotted admirers of antiquity, as to endure them all without an attempt at amendment? But when the cause of humanity is at stake; when liberty, the most precious of our natural and civil rights is in question, we cannot hear without horror obsolete arguments and pedantic authorities pleaded as reasons for continuing a cruel, senseless, and intolerable grievance; which puts the thoughtless and unsuspicious in the power of the revengeful, the avaricious, and the extortionate; which has the most direct tendency to defeat the purpose it pretends to have in view; which makes poverty a crime, and places the unfortunate in the society of the felon; which feeds the worst passions of the relentless creditor; and hardens the tender heart of adversity into wretchedness or despair!

Better were it a thousand times that credit should be annihilated, and commerce itself perish, than be encouraged by means like these! The debtors who encumber our prisons are the disgrace of our police. The abuses by which their debts have been swelled, and the inexpressibly detestable practices by which their confinement is aggravated, must fill every feeling mind with a degree of indignation above the power of language to paint. If Lord Moira had no other claims to public approbation, this alone would stamp his merit. He is too noble to be

discouraged in his honourable undertaking by temporary opposition. And let the virtuous spirit of Lord Holland recollect that he will add new laurels, to those acquired by his honourable pursuits, by this new effort of his cultivated mind. It becomes a man like him, who adorns his station with the flowers of literary genius, thus to tread in the steps of his great uncle! These are the most grateful offerings, which he can strew on his mighty relative's grave! I am not ashamed to say this, in defiance of the opposition I feel to his political attachments.

March 17, 1808.

Art. DCCXXVI.

N°. XXVII. *On modern poetry; and particularly* Scott's *Romance of* Marmion.

——"Stans pede in uno." Hor.

While a wanton departure from ancient models is liable to just censure, a servile adherence to them is still more offensive. On one hand a grace may be snatched beyond the reach of art; on the other, every thing must be dull and creeping. We are apt to think highly of the ages that are past, and to complain mechanically of the dearth of genius in our own. In the poetical world seldom has the complaint been more ill founded than at present. As I would scorn to let envy suppress the praise of my cotemporaries, so would I scorn to sacrifice my sincerity for the purpose of flattering any one. From my heart I believe, that, though in these days we neither possess a Shakspeare, a Spenser, nor a Milton, yet seldom have we had such a galaxy of

genuine poets as at present adorn this country. A due regard to delicacy, and the just feelings of individuals, precludes me from a regular enumeration of them.

But a poem, which has been published in the present month, has filled me with delight so singular in its kind, and so high in its degree, that I will not suppress the generous emotion of gratitude that impels me to record my pleasure. Mr. Walter Scott's Romance of *Marmion, a Tale of Floddon Field*, contains a series of *Introductory Epistles*, novel in their kind, and as highly poetical and attractive as they are new.

The author has given its free and natural range to a mind most richly and exquisitely adorned with all the feelings and images of genuine poetry. How enchantingly, and with what ease and grace he exercises the wand of the magician, and brings before us the varied and changing creations of a moral, sentimental, and picturesque fancy, will be better felt than expressed by every reader of taste and sensibility! Poetry here appears in its natural shape, uncramped by rules, and unfettered by proto-types.

Mason, I think, somewhere says, that what is easy reading is not easy writing. The remark has always struck me as singularly unhappy. Studied writings never pursue the natural association of ideas, and are therefore seldom perused without labour, and deliberate attention. The intermediate links are imperceptibly dropped by the painful composer; and all that freshness and raciness, which finds an instant mirror in every mind, is gone. Dr. Warton

records a curious anecdote of Dryden's noble Ode on Alexander's Feast, which he says was composed at a sitting, and which accounts for that irresistible charm of vigour and brilliance, that pervades the whole of it.

Let not idleness and imbecility take advantage of these remarks. Faculties of an ordinary cast must not presume to shew their nakedness. It is only for heads and hearts highly endowed to pour forth their stores without premeditation. Others must be left to the humbler kind of merit, that is attainable by study and toil. From the sacred paths of poetry, from all that is to hurry away the mind into scenes of imaginary splendour, they would do well to abstain. The frigid labour of forcing words into rhythm, of seeking for figures in which to invest trite thoughts, will never succeed in producing the effects of genuine poetry. The infatuated operator may have the luck of procuring the praise of the mechanical critic, who judges by rules; but the public will sleep over his work, and then quit it for more rational prose, which has all its merit without any of its defects.

What a contrast are the effusions of Walter Scott! He seizes the lyre, and scatters about his wild strains at every careless touch. His notes

> ——————" sweet music breathe
> Above, about, or underneath
> Sent by some spirit to mortal's good,
> Or th' unseen genius of the wood."*

* L'Allegro.

His six epistles are addressed to 1. William Stewart Rose, Esq. 2. The Rev. John Marriot. 3. William Erskine, Esq. 4. James Skene, Esq. 5. George Ellis, Esq. 6. Richard Heber, Esq. The first opens thus:

" Ashesteel, Ettricke Forest.

" November's sky is chill and drear,
November's leaf is red and sear:
Late, gazing down the steepy linn,
That hems our little garden in,
Low in its dark and narrow glen
You scarce the rivulet might ken,
So thick the tangled greenwood grew,
So feeble trill'd the streamlet through:
Now murmuring hoarse and frequent seen
Through bush and brier, no longer green,
An angry brook, it sweeps the glade,
Brawls over brook and wild cascade,
And, foaming brown with doubled speed,
Hurries its waters to the Tweed.

No longer Autumn's glowing red
Upon our forest hills is shed;
No more beneath the evening beam,
Fair Tweed reflects their purple gleam;
Away hath pass'd the heather-bell,
That bloom'd so rich on Need-path fell.
Sallow his brows, and russet bare,
Are now the sister heights of Yair.
The sheep, before the pinching heaven,
To shelter'd dale and down, are driven,
Where yet some faded herbage pines,
And yet a watery sunbeam shines:

In meek despondency they eye
The withered sward and wintry sky,
And far beneath their summer hill
Stray sadly by Glenkinnon's rill:
The shepherd shifts his mantle's fold,
And wraps him closer from the cold;
His dogs no merry circles wheel,
But, shivering, follow at his heel;
A cowering glance they often cast,
As deeper moans the gathering blast."

I cannot refrain from giving one more specimen, taken from the Third Epistle.

" Thus while I ape the measure wild
Of tales that charm'd me yet a child,
Rude though they be, still with the chime
Return the thoughts of early time;
And feelings rous'd in life's first day
Glow in the line, and prompt the lay.
Then rise those crags, that mountain tower,
Which charm'd my fancy's wakening hour:
Though no broad river swept along
To claim perchance heroic song;
Though sigh'd no groves in summer gale,
To prompt of love a softer tale;
Though scarce a puny streamlet's speed
Claimed homage from a shepherd's reed;
Yet was poetic impulse given,
By the green hill and clear blue heaven.
It was a barren scene and wild,
Where naked cliffs were rudely pil'd;
But ever and anon between
Lay velvet tufts of loveliest green;

And well the lonely infant knew
Recesses where the wall-flower grew,
And honey-suckle lov'd to crawl
Up the low crag and ruin'd wall.
I deem'd such nooks the sweetest shade,
The sun in all his round survey'd;
And still I thought that shattered tower
The mightiest work of human power;
And marvell'd, as the aged hind
With some strange tale bewitch'd my mind
Of Forayers, who, with headlong force,
Down from that strength had spurr'd their horse,
Their southern rapine to renew,
Far in the distant Cheviots blue,
And, home returning, fill'd the hall
With revel, wassell-route, and brawl.
Methought that still with cramp and clang
The gate-way's broken arches rang;
Methought grim features, seam'd with scars,
Glar'd through the window's rusty bars.
And ever by the winter hearth,
Old tales I heard of woe or mirth,
Of lover's sleights, of ladies' charms,
Of witch's spells, of warriors arms;
Of patriot battles, won of old
By Wallace wight and Bruce the bold;
Of later fields of feud and sleight,
When pouring from their Highland height,
The Scottish clans, in headlong sway,
Had swept the scarlet ranks away.
While stretch'd at length upon the floor,
Again I fought each combat o'er,
Pebbles and shells, in order laid,
The mimic ranks of war display'd;

And onward still the Scottish lion bore,
And still the scatter'd Southron fled before."

March 17, 1808.

Art. DCCXXVII.

N°. XXVIII. *Genius incompatible with a narrow taste.*

" Many people have been employed in finding out obscure and refined beauties in what appear to ordinary observation his very defects." Miss Baillie.

That mighty gift of the Deity, which enables mankind to cast a glance over the whole surface of creation, and even to penetrate occasionally with some success into its internal movements, is sadly limited in its faculties by the exclusive contemplation of individual excellence, even though the most wonderful and super-eminent in the annals of human existence.

I have therefore always thought, that the sort of idolatry, which for nearly half a century we have been called on to pay even to Shakspeare himself, has been carried a little too far to be consistent with a due expansion of our intellects. A sound candour must admit that the words *bigotry* and *idolatry* are indeed literally applicable to this confined occupation of our taste and pleasures. Lord Grey, on Tuesday last,* applied the terms *besotted bigotry* to another occasion; and, whether applicable† or not,

* March 15, in the House of Lords, on the Reversion Bill.

† I do not mean to insinuate that the application was just. On that I give no opinion. I allude to his positions as general truths, well expressed.

described the evils of bigotry with great force and animation of language, and a poignant acuteness of discrimination.

Warton in his account of Sackville's *Gorboduc* remarks that such has been the undistinguishing or ill-placed fondness for the bard of Avon, that some of his worst and most tinsel passages, and surely a more unequal poet never wrote, have been admired the most.

The diversities of mental excellence are endless; and never did Providence, in its most favoured productions, unite all the varied powers, of which the progress of time is continually developing new hues. To bind ourselves fearfully to models is the mark of a secondary genius.

When I perceive a man incapable of deriving pleasure from more than one style of composition, and dogmatising on its exclusive merit, I pity his weakness, and despise his presumption. When he narrows his curiosity either to what is old or what is new, when he confines his praise to the dead, or to the living, though in both cases he is ridiculous, perhaps his folly is more venial in the last.

Why should one man of genius be envious or jealous of another? There is room enough for all. Another thousand years may roll over us without encumbering the stores of intellectual delight, or exhausting the topics of intellectual attention! Even in a selfish point of view, such envy or jealousy is absurd. Can any individual, could even the richness of Shakspeare's vein, find food enough to satisfy the public mind? That mind grows voracious with indulgence; and the more it is exercised, the

more quantity, and the greater variety, it requires. By the collision of intellects, new lights are struck out, and mutual assistance is derived for the new combinations of each. The most happy faculties require the infusion of new materials, which give new colours to the fancy, and resuscitate its creations.

We talk of Shakspeare's originality. He is original in the proper and best sense. But it is evident that all the literature and all the topics of his day contributed to his materials. There had been no Shakspeare, such as he now is, but for his predecessors and cotemporaries.

If we speak of a more modern author, who, however beautiful, cannot be put in the same class with Shakspeare, we shall be able to trace almost all the ingredients of his pathetic and sublime compositions home to their sources: yet without detracting much in my opinion from their merit, or even their invention. The poet I mean is GRAY. The particles of thought, and even expressions in numerous instances, belong to others: the *combination* is his own. His exquisite productions could not have existed, such as they are, without the previous operation of other minds. Yet who but Gray could have formed them into so new and perfect a whole? Let it not be supposed that he sought these artificial aids at the hour of composition; they had already been gradually amalgamated in his mind; and when the moment of inspiration came, they involuntarily sprung up into their present shape. The Elegy, the Ode to Spring, the Ode on Eton College, and the Hymn to Adversity, seem to have been all

written under one impression of feelings. The same affecting and sublime melancholy pervades the whole.

Unhappy indeed is the author in whom there is no good; from whom there is no pleasure or information to be gleaned. Even a slight ray of genius will add some value to a composition. We daily meet with readers who confine themselves to a few authors, by whom they consider all excellence to be engrossed. They pride themselves on the choiceness of their judgment; and hang over the same strains till almost superhuman merit would tire. When all the numerous, and varying colours of the rainbow are displayed to our sight, shall we content ourselves with preferring one or two simple tints, however beautiful?

March 18, 1808.

Art. DCCXXVIII.

N°. XXIX. *Traits in the character of Gray the Poet.*

"We poets are, upon a poet's word,
Of all mankind the creatures most absurd."

Can we judge of a man's actions by the hues of his mind? I am afraid that we cannot with any reasonable certainty. They who are bold in intellect are often timid in conduct; and imbecility, or, at least, a morbid delicacy, marks the personal character of many, whose abstract sentiments are constantly distinguished by vigour and energy. Instead of withdrawing on this account our admiration from

individuals, we must only lament the inconsistencies of our weak and imperfect nature!

These remarks have immediately resulted from contemplating the mental and moral traits of Gray, the poet. His faculties were endowed with uncommon strength; he thought with a manly nervousness; and he penetrated forcibly to the bottom of every subject, which engaged his attention. But his petty manners were disagreeably effeminate and fastidious; his habits wanted courage and hardiness; and his temper and spirits were a prey to feebleness, indolence, and trivial derangements. His heart was pure; and his conduct, I firmly believe, stained with no crime. He loved virtue for its own sake, and felt a just, and never slackened indignation at vice. But the little irritations of his daily temper were too much affected by trifles; he loved to assume the character of *the fine gentleman;* a mean and odious ambition in any one; but scarcely to be forgiven in a man of genius. He would shrug his shoulders, and distort his voice into fastidious tones; and take upon him the airs of what folly is pleased to call *high company.*

High company! What is it? By whom is the name so impudently engrossed? Perhaps in any country it is a distinction of little value; at least it is beneath a man of genius; but in this country, in the sense, which it is meant to convey, it does not exist! Mere wealth, however got, has been so long allowed to obtain admission, and to form a large portion among the upper orders of society, that it does not even imply a prevalence of well-

educated, and early polished manners! From the changes produced by commerce, the revenues of the old and permanent families are inadequate to the purposes of luxuries; and adventurers and placemen enjoy, for the most part, the preeminence derived from the splendour of money.

Gray in early life had lived much, and travelled, with his intimate friend and school-fellow, Horace Walpole; and I am afraid that there was some little tinge of adulation in his manners towards him; notwithstanding Gray's love of independence triumphed, and separated them abroad. It was Walpole's misfortune to be a coxcomb; and though brought up under a father, who, whatever were his merits and importance, had certainly no pretensions to refined and polished manners, he much affected, as new nobility are apt to do, what is vulgarly called the *haut ton:* his love of literature and his talents (for his talents were of no mean order) were constantly teaching him a better lesson; the whispers of authorship at times soothed him with the hopes of a more honourable distinction; but his struggles are apparent, and often ridiculous; and he could never separate the claims of the man of fashion from those of the writer; nor of the writer from those of the man of fashion.

But Gray, as Mason well observes, had no pretensions to the paltry superiority either of birth or fortune; in him therefore it was a still more lamentable foible to indulge any vanity of this kind. Or rather to assume the first appearance of such a weakness; for his friends who knew him intimately,

say that on a nearer inspection it wore off! He was excessively shy and reserved; and was content to let it take the dress of pride and reserve.

We expect in one, whose "mind is his kingdom," a manner careless of little observances, absent, silent or talkative by fits, indifferent to petty distinctions, scorning puffed-up rank, ardent in opinion, and eloquent and forcible, if unequal, in language. Too vehement for affectation or precision, we expect to see him with a neglected person, and eyes beaming an irregular and fearful fire. If there should enter one in a habit neat and studied, with a formal and "travelled" and artificial address; an effeminate voice; and looks rolling warily as if to catch minute breaches of form; should we believe that man to be a poet?

In the freedom of the closet, in the hours of unrestrained solitude, the little vile passions of artificial society never mingled themselves with the purity of Gray's thoughts. There his expanded soul contemplated nature in its general operations; and studied the movements of the human bosom independent of the casual effects of particular seasons and places. The sentiments of the Elegy in the Churchyard must be delightful to all ranks and conditions, in every country, and in every state of our civilized nature.

It seems extraordinary that one, who could write so well, should have written so little: nor am I sure that he can be quite acquitted of having hidden that talent, which is not given to be hidden. "Of him to whom much is given, much shall be required." The larger portion, and the best, of his poems, were

composed in the year, in which he lost his friend West. Did low spirits suppress his future efforts? Or were his powers paralyzed by too anxious a desire to preserve rather than hazard his established fame? Such an anxiety would prove that timid weakness, which seems to me the main defect in the poet's character.

Facility is acquired by practice; and ease and simplicity of manner, which are among the greatest charms of composition, are the probable result. Gray therefore might even have improved his powers by further exercise. But even if he had not, it becomes a manly mind not to be too fearful of fame: we should endeavour to deserve it by rational means; and have the fortitude to endure the consequences, if we fail. A petty solicitude never yet obtained its end.

It is not sufficient to feel and think poetically; before any one can win the wreath of a poet, he must be able to arrest, clothe in language, and communicate to others, his thoughts. This is, in truth, the very difficulty and essence of the art; our ideas are so transient and fugitive, (and they are generally so in proportion to the richness and variety of the mind, which produces them,) that it requires great happiness, great practice, and a great and rapid command of words to seize and delineate them. If they are not thus seized, if the production is the result of slow thoughts, and forced conceptions, they may wear the outward form of poetry, and obtain the praise of a cold-hearted critic who judges by rule; but they will never exhibit the charms of true poetry, nor be permanently popular.

Gray therefore would have deserved still better of posterity, if he had exercised the wonderful faculties given him by Nature more frequently.

April 8, 1808.

Art. DCCXXIX.

N°. XXX. *On the severity of fashionable Criticism.*

" Let no unworthy mien her form debase,
But let her smile, and let her frown with grace." Brown.

Indiscriminate praise is nauseous; but there is a fashion, lately grown up, still more disgusting than indiscriminate praise. The public is now to be gratified by malignant criticism, exercised upon all occasions at the expense of justice and truth.

It is a bad trait of the age, that it can be gratified at such an abuse of the powers of argument and wit. Ill temper may, no doubt, be connected with acute discrimination and admirable faculties of taste. But when we know that writers are actuated by mercenary motives to feed a depravity of public appetite, we are so far from feeling the motive to be an apology, that we think it less excusable, than if they were impelled by the spleen of a bitter judgment.

To turn the tide of fashion, to counteract that extreme to which the popular rage is always verging, may indeed admit of some excuse, and deserve even some praise. An insipid style of criticism may gradually lose all the wholesome powers of correction, which are necessary to be exercised by the public censors. But it is at least equally injurious, and far more unamiable, to be uniform in the use of the

rod! False praise never yet exalted the undeserving into permanent popularity; false abuse has nipped the bud of many a rising genius, and silenced many an inspired tongue for ever.

The exquisite and almost angelic strains of Kirke White, emanating from the lips of a boy, were nearly extinguished by the stupid, ignorant, and insolent sarcasms of a tasteless and presumptuous reviewer; and Cowper was told, on the publication of his first volume, that he had not a spark of genius, or poetical fancy. When Charlotte Smith first published her *Sonnets*, some of the hireling critics spoke of her, as one of whom motives of charity might induce them to speak leniently, but who scarcely deserved a place among the meanest of our versifiers.

They, who know how our works of periodical criticism are manufactured, will not wonder at this; but it would be vain to deny that they have a temporary and wide effect on the public. When a certain Review came out, and I noticed it in the possession of one, who I thought cared little about literature, "Yes," said he, "I can take but one; and I am determined that that shall be *piquant!*"

But will not high-seasoning at last lose its effect? Dram-drinkers in the end lose all the pleasure of the taste, but feel the result in the decay of their bodily and mental faculties.

While the public keenness is thus gratified only to have its sense of enjoyment palled, what possible good can arise from thus damping all energy, and even annihilating hope in the candidates for honourable fame? The pretender is not deterred; he is too presumptuous and unfeeling; the well-qualified

aspirer to intellectual honours shrinks like the sensitive plant at the touch, and perhaps closes his leaves, and shuts his bosom for ever!

There is no work which may not be made ridiculous, if the sole object be to find fault; there is none perhaps, to which ingenuity may not discover well-founded objections. Were the *Paradise Lost* to be now given to the world for the first time, how practicable it would be, according to the modern system of criticism, to convince those who had not seen it, that it was a work dull, prosaic, tedious, and without a spark of genius!

April 8, 1808.

Art. DCCXXX.

N°. XXXI. *On adulation of the Great.*

"Principibus placuisse viris non ultima laus est." Hor.

There is nothing so disgusting in a character which has pretensions of its own to notice, as a mean admiration of rank or wealth. It is impossible to deny that it is a foible, which has sometimes accompanied great abilities. Dr. Johnson had this weakness: "His respect," says Boswell, "for the hierarchy, and particularly for dignitaries of the church, has been more than once exhibited in the course of this work. Mr. Seward saw him once presented to the Archbishop of York, and described his *bow* to an Archbishop, as such a studied elaboration of homage, such an extension of limb, such a flexion of body, as have seldom or ever been equalled."

If genius and literature do not exalt our minds above the influence of this vulgar kind of greatness, how little of real dignity do they produce! A froward insolence to superior station arises often from a selfish and uneducated temper; but a complacent indifference to those beams of false splendour, by which it too frequently attempts to dazzle our eyes, is among the most enviable traits of a cultivated and enlarged understanding.

This was one of the most prominent and admirable of the many prominent and admirable features of Burns the poet. No contrast between the meanness of his own birth and early habits, and the glare of titles and riches, overset his manly and powerful mind. Yet he is said to have marked well the shades between the aristocracy of rank and the aristocracy of genius, and to have properly allowed to each the due portion of respect.

Swift seems to have betrayed a pettish and unmeasured disregard of those, who were lifted above him by the adventitious qualities of artificial society. By this very sort of disregard he gave proof of the violence of their operation on him. Had Swift been placed by birth or fortune in the highest classes, his pride and haughtiness would have been insufferable.

I despise neither titles nor wealth: I am an aristocrat, convinced of the wisdom and necessity of the subordination of ranks; and by no means unwilling to concede proper civility and precedence to them. I would have no man, to whom they belong, forego them; nor can I contemplate with apathy the blood of illustrious ancestors flowing in any

one's veins. But when these claims of superiority are put in competition with moral and intellectual qualities, I feel indignant, and cannot suppress my contempt for the person in whose mind they are not eclipsed.

It has sometimes been the hard lot of men of strong endowments to be dependents at the tables of nobility. What can we expect from them in this situation that is not servile and mean?

A head and heart purged from all vain influences, and neither cringing or insolent to the high, nor supercilious to the low, are what we demand from a due cultivation of the seeds of intellectual excellence.

Never was there a time when a solid understanding was in so little danger from the bewitching brilliance of power, and honours, and money, as at present. The age of the splendour of statesmen and peers is past; we have few men of independent estates and ancient titles; and still fewer whose personal qualities invest them with glory and command. All, or almost all, is heavy, dull, ungenerous, creeping, selfish, and narrow. No liberal regard to genius, no feeling of the enthusiasms of eloquence, no sense of the splendour of the past, no conception of "the shadowy tribes of mind;" no conscientious delicacy towards ancient pretensions; but a sad and low submission to the operation of shillings and pence, covered over with new or half-old titles, obtained by servility and corruption in office, and considered as grounds of monopoly and exclusion of all but themselves!

How very short a space has elapsed, since we were illuminated by the radiant talents of Burke, Fox and Pitt together; and we had shining in the same sphere many other men, great by nature, who are all now silent in the grave! A dull and fearful calm has succeeded the bright storms of their amazing powers.

In the annals of human nature, Plutus has been a god always too much worshipped, and generally from the most sordid motives. Hateful dispositions, which esteem every thing attractive and amiable in the rich, and every thing wrong or unworthy of notice in the poor and the humble! Which can find wit in the silly jests of the purse-laden fool; and cannot listen to wisdom itself from the lips of one who possesses neither fortune nor rank!

To weak minds there is much in the show of equipages and attendants, and gaudy houses, and splendid dress; to the sensual there is much in the luxury of well-covered tables; and to the interested there are attractions in the spoils of patronage. We see these delusions operating on understandings, from which nature had promised better things. But all I shall say further at present of any one under such influence is the following citation:

"Hic niger est: hunc tu, Romane, caveto!"

April 9, 1808.

Art. DCCXXXI.

N°. XXXII. *Character of, and extracts from Habingdon's* Castara.

"To virtue only and her friends a friend,
The world beside may murmur or commend."

Pope.

As it has been insinuated, I think a little hardly, that my Essays, having little relation to ancient literature, are not sufficiently connected with the primary object of this work, I shall fill the present paper with extracts from an old poet, whose compositions appear to me to have been most unjustly neglected.

William Habingdon, a Worcestershire gentleman, of noble alliances, flourished in the reign of Charles I. He was born at Hendlip, Nov. 4, 1605. His mother was Mary, sister to William Parker, Lord Morley, and Monteagle; and is supposed to be the person who wrote the warning letter to her brother, which led to the discovery of the Gun-powder plot. Her husband and son were bigoted Catholics. William married Lucy daughter of William Herbert, Lord Powis, whose mother was a Percy: and this Lady, under the character of Castara, formed the principal subject of his poems, which were first published in 1635, 8vo. and again under the title of *Castara*; and had a third edition under the last title, 1640, 12mo.

They possess much elegance, much poetical fancy; and are almost every where tinged with a deep moral cast, which ought to have made their fame

permanent. Indeed I cannot easily account for the neglect of them. I do not mean that they are not very commonly known among collectors; but the public is little acquainted with them.

The following extracts have not hitherto, I believe, been offered to the notice of modern readers. They are replete with those ethical charms which make them not ill-placed in a *Ruminator*.

To my worthy Cousin Mr. E. C. In praise of the City Life in the long Vacation.

" I like the green plush which your meadows wear,
I praise your pregnant fields, which duly bear
Their wealthy burden to the industrious boor;
Nor do I disallow that who are poor
In mind and fortune, thither should retire;
But hate that he, who's warm with holy fire
Of any knowledge, and 'mong us may feast
On nectar'd wit, should turn himself to a beast,
And graze i' th' country. Why did Nature wrong
So much her pains, as to give you a tongue
And fluent language; if converse you hold
With oxen in the stall, and sheep i' th' fold?
But now it's long vacation, you will say;
The town is empty; and whoever may
To th' pleasure of his country home repair,
Flies from th' infection of our London air.
In this your error. Now's the time alone
To live here, when the City Dame is gone
T' her house at Brentford; for beyond that, she
Imagines, there's no land but Barbary,
Where lies her husband's factor. When from hence
Rid' is the Country Justice, whose non-sense

Corrupted had the language of the inn,
Where he and his horse litter'd; we begin
To live in silence, when the noise of th' Bench
Not deafens Westminster, nor corrupt French
Walks Fleetstreet in her gown. Ruffs of the Bar,
By the Vacation's power, translated are
To cut work-bands. And who were busy here,
Are gone to sow sedition in the Shire.
The air by this is purg'd; and the Term's strife
Thus fled the city, we the civil life
Lead happily. When in the gentle way
Of noble mirth I have the live-long day
Contracted to a moment, I retire
To my Castara; and meet such a fire
Of mutual love; that if the city were
Infected, that would purify the air."

"*To my noblest Friend I. C. Esq.*

SIR,

"I hate the country's dirt and manners, yet
I love the silence; I embrace the wit
And courtship, flowing here in a full tide,
But loath the expence, the vanity, and pride.
No place each way is happy. Here I hold
Commerce with some, who to my ear unfold,
(After a due oath minister'd) the height
And greatness of each star shines in the state;
The brightness, the eclipse, the influence.
With others I commune, who tell me whence
The torrent doth of foreign discord flow;
Relate each skirmish, battle, overthrow,
Soon as they happen; and by rote can tell
Those German towns, e'en puzzle me to spell.

The cross or prosperous fate of Princes they
Ascribe to rashness, cunning, or delay;
And on each action comment with more skill,
Than upon Livy did old Machiavil.
O busy folly! Why do I my brain
Perplex with the dull policies of Spain,
Or quick designs of France? Why not repair
To the pure innocence o' th' country air;
And neighbour thee, dear friend; who so dost give
Thy thoughts to worth and virtue, that to live
Blest is to trace thy ways? There might not we
Arm against passion with philosophy;
And by the aid of leisure so controul
Whate'er is earth in us, to grow all soul?
Knowledge doth ignorance engender, when
We study mysteries of other men,
And foreign plots. Do but in thy own shade,
(Thy head upon some flowery pillow laid
Kind Nature's housewifery) contemplate all
His stratagems, who labours to enthrall
The world to his great master; and you'll find
Ambition mocks itself, and grasps the wind.
Not conquest makes us great. Blood is too dear
A price for glory: Honour doth appear
To statesmen like a vision in the night;
And juggler-like works o' th' deluded sight:
The unbusied only wise; for no respect
Endangers them to error; they affect
Truth in her naked beauty, and behold
Man with an equal eye; not fraught in gold
Or tall in title; so much him they weigh,
As virtue raiseth him above his clay.
Thus let us value things; and since we find
Time bends us towards death, let's in our mind

Create new youth, and arm against the rude
Assaults of age; that no dull solitude
Of th' country dead our thoughts; nor busy care,
O' th' town make us not think, where now we are,
And whither we are bound. Time ne'er forgot
His journey, though his steps we number'd not."

" *To the Rt. Honourable Archibald Earl of Argyle.*

" If your example be obey'd,
The serious few will live i' th' silent shade;
And not endanger by the wind,
Or sunshine the complexion of their mind;
Whose beauty wears so clear a skin,
That it decays with the least taint of sin.
Vice grows by custom, nor dare we
Reject it as a slave, where it breathes free;
And is no privilege denied;
Nor, if advanced to higher place, envied.
Wherefore your Lordship in yourself
(Nor launch'd far in the main, nor nigh the shelf
Of humbler fortune) lives at ease,
Safe from the rocks o' the shore, and stars o' th' seas.
Your soul's a well-built city, where
There's such munitions, that no war breeds fear:
No rebels wild distractions move;
For you the heads have crush'd; Rage, Envy, Love;
And therefore you defiance bid
To open enmity, or mischief hid
In fawning hate and supple pride,
Who are on every corner fortified.
Your youth, not rudely led by rage
Of blood, is now the story of your age,
Which without boast you may aver,
'Fore blackest danger glory did prefer;

Glory, not purchas'd by the breath
Of sycophants, but by encountering death.
Yet wildness, nor the fear of laws
Did make you fight, but justice of the cause;
For but mad prodigals they are
Of fortitude, who for itself love war.
When well-made peace had clos'd the eyes
Of Discord, Sloth did not your youth surprise.
Your life as well as power did awe
The bad, and to the good was the best law;
When most men virtue did pursue,
In hope by it to grow in fame like you.
Nor when you did to court repair,
Did you your manners alter with the air.
You did your modesty retain,
Your faithful dealing, the same tongue and brain,
Nor did all the soft flattery there
Inchant you so, but still you truth could hear.
And though your roofs were richly gilt,
The basis was on no ward's ruin built.
Nor were your vassals made a prey,
And forc'd to curse the coronation day.
And though no bravery was known
To outshine yours, you only spent your own.
For 'twas the indulgence of fate
To give y' a moderate mind and bounteous state.
But I, my Lord, who have no friend
Of fortune, must begin where you do end.
'Tis dang'rous to approach the fire
Of action, nor is't safe for to retire;
Yet better lost i' th' multitude
Of private men, than on the state t' intrude,
And hazard for a doubtful smile
My stock of fame, and inward peace to spoil.

I'll therefore nigh some murmuring brook,
That wantons thro' my meadows, with a book
With my Castara, or some friend,
My youth not guilty of ambition spend!
To my own shade, if Fate permit,
I'll whisper some soft music of my wit;
And flatter so myself, I'll see,
By that, strange motion steal into the tree.
But still my first and chiefest care
Shall be t' appease offended heaven with prayer;
And in such mould my thoughts to cast,
That each day shall be spent as 'twere my last.
Howe'er its sweet lust to obey,
Virtue, tho' rugged, is the safest way." *

April 10, 1808.

Art. DCCXXXII.

N°. XXXIII. *Rank, and riches, and ease of heart, not favourable to intellectual exertion.*

"Sed quæ Tibur æquæ fertile perfluunt,
Et spissæ nemorum comæ
Fingent Æolio carmine nobilem." Hor.

It seems as if prosperity, rank, and riches have not been well calculated to produce energetic exertions of the mind. The number of peers in this country who have aspired to the fame of poets has been very small. The list may be almost limited to the following. The Earl of Surrey, Lords Vaux and Rochford, Lord Buckhurst, Lord Brooke, the Earls of Rochester and Roscommon, the Duke of Buck-

* A very different character of Lord Argyle, is insinuated in this poem, from that which has been drawn by Lord Clarendon.

inghamshire, Lord Halifax, Lord Lansdowne, and Lord Lyttelton.* It appears that beds of roses, and adventitious distinctions keep our imperfect nature, which requires violent stimulants, in a state of too much languor and indolence.

Of the noble authors whom I have named, there are but three who deserve extraordinary praise. Lord Surrey and Lord Buckhurst will always stand pre-eminent in the annals of English literature for their genius, without reference to their station; and their works have to this day lost little of their attraction in the judgment of any who can feel the force of true poetry. They would form an exception to my position, if we did not recollect the times in which they wrote. Lord Surrey almost from his cradle to his death must have been subject, not merely to all the fatigues and dangers of adventurous Warfare, but to the anxieties and insecurities arising as well from the yet unsubsided effects of bloody civil commotions, and of the animosity of rival parties, as from the caprices of a jealous, despotic, and unrelenting monarch. Perils and "hair-breadth 'scapes;" the alternations of hope and fear, kept all his faculties in motion; and gave a vivid colouring to his sentiments. He "dipped his pencil in the living hues of nature," and his tints are not yet faded.

But Lord Buckhurst lived something later. He saw indeed his latter days crowned with peace, and riches, and titles. And then, alas! the lyre was mute. It was in the blood-thirsty reign of Mary, when the axe was lifted, and the stake blazed through the

* How praise-worthy then are the exertions of a living poet, Lord Byron! 1812.

kingdom, that his agitated powers brought forth the *Legend of the Duke of Buckingham;* and its sublime and picturesque *Induction.*

Lord Lyttelton, whose genius cannot be put in the same class with that of either of these great bards, but who, among the present list, stands next to them in merit, lived in a more calm and luxurious age. But they, who knew him best, have recorded that his life was a life of domestic affliction. His adversity might perhaps be salutary to the vigour of his intellect; and bring forth some of those tender fruits which all good and feeling minds must venerate. Nature had given him talents more elegant than forcible; more plaintive than sublime. But he, who is incapable of admiring the purity, sweetness, and benevolence of his character, his virtuous affections, and great acquirements, has a head and heart not to be envied. If we cast our eyes attentively through the registers of the English Peerage, we shall find few, whose memories are on the whole entitled to so much love and esteem as hat of George Lord Lyttelton!

We all wish for leisure, and silence, and exemption from biting cares, to enable us to execute those fond schemes, which our hopes flatter us we are capable, under better opportunities, of realizing. Milton in his youth hinted at the future glories he should beam forth, when at his ease, and "not in these noises!" The hour of silence indeed came; the silence of poverty and neglect; but neither carelessness of mind, nor exemption even from dark and almost overwhelming anxieties. Blind, poor, exposed to insult, and threatened with frightful dan-

gers, he seemed to call forth a double portion of strength; he threw off the incumbent weight like a giant, and behold! the Paradise Lost broke out in all its splendour!

The unhappiness of Poets is proverbial, and the malignity of the world is fond of attributing it to their own imprudences. But from what causes do those imprudences arise? From directing their minds into excursions beyond themselves; from not confining their attention and talents to lay plots for, and watch over, their own selfish interests! Perhaps however even this unhappiness, though it be a sad price to pay for the favours of the Muse, tends, for the reasons I have given, to invigorate their faculties, and give more affecting tones to the effusions of their lyre! Yet let not their persecutors thus satisfy their consciences; in them the crime becomes not only cruel but brutal; and they must only expect to be held up, as they deserve, according to a favourite quotation,

"Fit garbage for the hell-hound Infamy!"

April 11, 1808.

Art. DCCXXXIII.

N°. XXXIV. *A familiar poetical Epistle to a Friend, expressive of private melancholy.*

"He gain'd from Heaven, 'twas all he wish'd, a friend."

BY A CORRESPONDENT.

TO THE RUMINATOR.

SIR, May 10, 1808.

As you seem inclined to vary your papers by a mixture of poetry with your prose, I solicit admis-

sion for the following familiar Epistle, written literally currente calamo, by a very dear friend. As it contains some moral touches, I hope it will not dishonour your *ruminations*. To secure its insertion, I leave the name of the person, who is responsible for it, with your Printer. L. L. Z.

Familiar Epistle to the Rev.——— ———.

April 13, 1808.

Dear P*nn*****n, whose full stor'd-mind
Is with all varied wealth refin'd,
Permit me thus to scrawl at ease,
Without e'en the attempt to please!
Thy mighty intellect can spy
In rudest scrawls ability;
And can with kindest candour sigh
O'er casual imbecility!
Born of a race, whose mighty powers
O'er Europe's wide domains are known, * 10
Thy judgments no vile envy sours,
Thy censure takes no petty tone.
Learning and taste alike combine
The fiat of thy thoughts to sign;
And Genius, fairest of the three,
Is proud to own her strains in thee.
How oft with rapture do I hear
The enlighten'd words thy lips endear;
Oft on thy heart's decrees repose,
Whence goodness as from fountains flows! 20
To me in candour wilt thou listen,
Tho' in my strains no genius glisten?
Alas! thou know'st not, how distracted
The cares that on my brain have acted;

* This alludes to the learned Mrs. E. Carter.

My spirits low, my body weak,
I scarce in languid tone can speak,
Unless with agonized eyes
Loud indignation's tones arise,
Then leave me once again to languor,
Forgot the very sighs of anger!
Ah! thy more placid bosom knows
Not the wild rage, in me that glows;
Nor aught of the untam'd emotions,
That agitate my ill-star'd notions!
But thou the tumult wilt forgive,
In which by fate's decree I live!
When night's black shades invest the sky,
Doubtful of rest, tho' tir'd, I fly
To bed, where sleep my frame may bless
With transient forgetfulness!
But all the horrid thoughts of day
Come in a doubly-dark array;
And tear my bosom, and affright
My fancy with their glaring light!
O whence these tumults of my breast,
O why, when other bosoms rest,
Should thus my ease of mind be crost?
Should thus my life in cares be lost?
What special crimes have cast their stain,
Unworn by years of grief and pain?
I wander thro' the fields of morn,
I strive my temples to adorn
With all the simplest flowers, that grow
Beneath the spring's first genial glow;
I dress my humble mental powers
With learning's gems, and fancy's flowers;
I strive my heart to raise above
The selfish worldling's grovelling love,

And lift its bold affections high
On mighty views beyond the sky.
But traverst still, and still opprest,
I never knew an hour of rest;
Some insult breaks my wise resolves;
Some new injustice, that involves
My tinder passions in a flame,
Rises my dying strength to claim.
There are, my friend, who still survey
My irritations as their prey;
Who see indignant bursts, with joy,
My vital energy destroy;
And laugh to view th' exhausting pains
I feel, in struggling with my chains.
" He, whom the world a prophet deem,
In his own land has small esteem:"
Ah! friend, I own it with a sigh,
Nor prophet nor yet bard am I!
But still if they, as well they may,
Refuse such praise as this to pay,
The good denied, they might as well
Leave me without the attendant ill!
I've often heard it said, there is
In the mind's own exertions bliss;
And bliss there is; for were there not,
The bard's would be a hapless lot.
God help him, how would he endure
The laugh of the conceited boor,
The coxcomb's sneer, the cynic's frown,
The giggle of the senseless town,
The treach'rous critic's cover'd guile,
And yellow Envy's pallid smile.
Bursting with undiminished fires,
To his own mind the Bard retires—

Within himself the kingdom lies,
Which moves his heart and feasts his eyes—
Umbrageous groves around him spring,
Sweet birds within their coverts sing,
Streams murmur, meadows smile, fair maids
Dance or breathe love within the shades,
And harps from fairy castles sound,
Where feast and revelry abound.
Alas! too soon the vision flies;
In distant air the music dies,
And leaves him with exhausted frame
To mourn the void of phantom Fame!
E'en now I sit with aching head,
And limbs in listless languor spread,
While trembling hand can scarce impart
The dictates of a sinking heart:
Yet thus I cheat the weary hours,
While sable Care incumbent lours;
And bring my life's o'erwhelming woes
A little nearer to the close.
  The mark of calumny and wrong,
I stand Unkindness' sons among;
And they, who dare not insult show,
Where prosperous Fortune knits her brow,
Dare heap, as with impunity,
Their contumelious wrongs on me:
——— ——— ———
——— ——— ———
——— ——— ———
——— the ties of blood undone!
  Paternal acres, lov'd, ador'd,
That could my infant days afford
Such pure delights, as rise again,
With rapture that amounts to pain;

Is there———————————
——— ——— ———?
Full many a year of blackest grief
I still have nurs'd the fond belief,
The time at last would come, when I,
Repaid for all my agony,
In age's hour should sit at ease
Beneath hereditary trees,
And *calmly* should descend to death,
Where first I drew this hapless breath!
The stormy noon, when from the wave
Lscarce the batter'd bark could save,
Thus by the contrast might diffuse
O'er my life's evening brighter hues.
O fond delusion! sabler spread
The shades that thicken round my head;
And, dark as was the storm of noon,
Still heavier may the tempest soon
The vessel's weaken'd powers assail,
And whelm me headlong in the gale:
Youth's vigour lost, Hope's anchor gone,
Then Fate itself must cry, "undone."
"There is a home," my friend will say,
"Shining beyond yon milky way,
Where, (if on earth no peace abound,)
Nor storms molest, nor cares surround:
There point thy hopes, and strive to win,
By that true monitor within,
Yon seat of rest, where seraphs blaze;
Encircled with perrennial rays!"
'Tis true, dear friend; then I must close
This lengthen'd dreaming, feverish prose,
And you'll believe me, &c. &c.

Art. DCCXXXIV.

N°. XXXV. *A Second Familiar Epistle to another Friend.*

"On cares like these if length of days attend,
May Heav'n, to bless those days, preserve my friend."

POPE.

BY THE SAME CORRESPONDENT.

To the Rev. C. W———s.

April 18, 1808.

"COMPLAIN; for ever still complain!
O cease, my friend, the doleful strain!
No ills beyond the common fate
The future years, thou dread'st, await!
Then let your fancy dwell no more
On joys you never can restore,
Or storms, that in your fancy's eye
Are gathering in the distant sky!"
Well dost thou say: perchance no good
It is, o'er coming glooms to brood:
Then let me strive to while away
In present good the careless day,
Walk, ride, dig, saunter in the shade,
Or stray, where bards before have stray'd,
Along the meads, whose emerald green
To glow with new-sprung tints is seen;
Or sit at ease, and pour along
My unpremeditated song,
While varied visions play about
My mind in strange and motley rout.
They all are cheats, these charms of life,
For which we make such fretful strife;

Wealth, honours, fame, and gaudy show,
Empty as bubbles that we blow;
And he who can, the easiest way,
With innocence, beguile the day,
And soonest reach life's feverish close,
Where all our passions will repose,
Is after all, in reason's eyes,
The best, the happiest, and most wise.
Why should I vex my morbid frame
With thoughts, that put me in a flame?
With anger, at the scoundrel's wiles,
Whose infamy my pen defiles?
With scorn, that breaks its just control
At the poor insults of a fool?
With Treachery's trick, and Falsehood's vow,
And chang'd Affection's alter'd brow?
While Competence will yet bestow
The little that we want below,
The frugal meal, the simple vest,
The roof, tho' straw-built; what's the rest?
Superfluous luxury, that ne'er
Could lull to sleep a single care!
Fortune, that jade, may on us frown,
And think to keep our spirits down;
But can she bar the morning's gate,
When she comes dancing forth in state,
And throws her orient beams around,
With dew drops spangling all the ground?
Can she suppress the gales that bring
Delightful odours on their wing?
Can she, when Evening sails along,
Led by the nightingale's sweet song,
And murmuring sounds, and dying wind,
Soothe to deep peace the pensive mind,

And the Muse whispers in the ear,
Notes, it is ecstacy to hear;
Can she affright the Nymph away;
Or rudely tear her mantle grey?
Ah! can she rob us of the lore,
That genius treasures in her store?
The glowing thought, the golden forms,
Which into life rich fancy warms?
The heart that trembles, or that fires,
With all that Love or Fame inspires?
The soul, above the ills of fate,
Within itself sublimely great?
  Avaunt then to these low-born cares,
Beneath whose power my manhood wears!
And different be the star, that guides
My tossing vessel o'er the tides!
To Ease and Mirth I'll give the sway;
And while my thoughtless life away,
Reckless of its concluding day;
Whether its sand be ebbing fast;
Or dim and distant be its last!
  Methinks, this beauteous orb can show
Much for pure Admiration's glow;
The laughing earth; the radiant bow
That shines above, what time the Morn
Begins this scene of things adorn;
Or when at Night the planets vie
With radiant blaze amid the sky:
And e'en the human tribe among,
Tho' much abounds for Satire's song,
Tho' vile Self-Interest far prevails,
And Scandal tells her poison'd tales;
Tho' Malice grins, and Cruelty
Inflicts her blood-stain'd agony;

Yet he who looks with eye inclin'd
Pleasure and love alone to find,
Perchance may see, in most he meets,
Something, his better hope that greets!
To smile at wrong; but when we view
An honest heart, believe it true;
Cherish the treasure, and requite
It's kindling movements with delight;
Of Nature's ever-varying hues
Not beauty in a tint to lose;
Is that divine philosophy,
Which best becomes the wise to try!
  Sorrow may for a casual hour
The sinking spirits still o'erpower;
Disease may still the frame torment;
And Spleen her transient sourness vent;
Injustice may thy claims withhold,
And prosperous Wealth reign uncontroll'd;
And fiends, as Indignation boils,
Have a brief triumph in their wiles!
But Chearfulness will soon resume
Her light, the brow to re-illume,
And the calm sunshine of the breast
Will soothe uneasy cares to rest!
  Sure Nature never could design
This earthly flame, tho' sparks divine
Are with its grosser matter mix'd,
On constant thinking to be fix'd!
The mind, intensely thus employ'd,
By its own efforts is destroy'd;
And feebly sinks the body's power,
Which the brain's fevers soon devour.
Some mortal pleasure we require
Mingled with intellectual fire;

For here, alas! the embodied soul
Struggles in vain against control;
And best its happier weapons wields,
When to its fate it sometimes yields.
Be mine then, in my future days,
Not to such heights my thoughts to raise;
Nor seek, since I must seek in vain,
Realms of such shadowy light to gain;
But play, like those of humbler aim,
And humour this imperfect frame;
And walk, and ride, and talk, and smile,
Like those whom no proud hopes beguile;
And, loit'ring in heaven's freshest air,
Its balmy bracing blessing share!
For shatter'd now is every nerve;
And my limbs from their duty swerve;
And aching head and trembling hand
Will soon refuse my mind's command.
Yet if like others I had sought
In fields and woods for health unbought,
Perchance this form, mid squires and boors,
In pastimes rude had shewn its powers;
And sinewy arm and ruddy mien
Had laugh'd to scorn Disease and Spleen.
If in my head, in varied maze,
With fire unquench'd ideas blaze;
If in my heart sad tenderness
Incessant rules to wild excess;
Can these the loss of health requite,
The careless day, the slumbrous night,
The body, thro' whose purple veins
Strength, freedom, ease, and pleasure reigns?
Then thoughts that breathe, and words that warm,
Which no pale agonies deform,

While voice of music plays its part,
Send their full raptures to the heart!
But ah! while pines this mould of clay
Discordant to the mental ray,
Upon the altar of the mind
Vain burns the inward fire enshrin'd.

Art. DCCXXXV.

N°. XXXVI. *On the Theological writings of Grotius.*

"Fama, malum." Virg.

FOR THE RUMINATOR.

Sir,

You may, perhaps, remember to have heard, in your earlier days, the vulgar proverb, "give a dog an ill name and hang him." Like most other popular maxims it has its foundation in truth; and the qualities imputed to men as well as dogs do not, in general, so much depend upon realities, as upon casual report; or, according to the elegant expression of Horace, *arbitrio popularis aurœ*. The converse also of this proposition is equally true, and it is usually found that when a man has acquired a great reputation the world is sufficiently disposed to acquiesce in it, and not only to allow him the merit which he really has, but to ascribe to him also that which he has not. The *magni nominis umbra*, (if I may so apply it) becomes a covering for ignorance and presumption, and sometimes even for folly; for the greater part of the world are not capable of distinguishing between false and true

pretensions; and those who are, either are afraid of popular clamour, or think that error will at length be discovered without their assistance.

I am almost afraid to usher in by these observations the venerable name of Grotius. "Is Grotius," it will be said, "liable to these imputations; Grotius to whom all Europe is so indebted, to whom the cause of revealed religion owes so much; Grotius, the statesman, the soldier, the civilian, and the theologian?" Had he not been a theologian, there would have been no cause for this caution concerning him; but notwithstanding the depth of his learning, the excellency of his moral character, and the sincerity of his belief, of which I am firmly persuaded, I cannot help thinking that it will admit of a doubt whether he has not done more harm than good to the Christian religion. So great is the authority of his name, and so high his character, that even among divines there is scarcely allowed an appeal from his decision; and there is hardly to be found a single work, relating to scriptural subjects, in which Grotius is not quoted. One reason for this high opinion of his judgment is, that he was not of the clerical order; for, strange as it may seem, there exists a strong prejudice in the world in favour of lay writers on divinity. Yet would a commentary on the laws carry more weight with it because written by a clergyman, or a treatise on physic because written by a lawyer? If not, why should it be supposed that a layman can write, in a more instructive and convincing manner than a clergyman can do, upon the very subject which he has made the chief study of his life?

The principal, if not the only theological works of Grotius, are his voluminous commentaries on the Old and New Testaments, and a small treatise "On the Truth of the Christian Religion." Both these are written in good Latin, but the former is liable to many objections. One of the greatest of these arises from the too great regard which he pays to Talmudic fables and Talmudic interpretations, which may be productive of very bad consequences to the incautious. It was obviously the view of the later Jews to insert in their Talmuds such interpretations of the scriptures as might justify their rejection of Jesus as the promised Messiah. For this reason they appropriated a great number of the most striking prophecies which were fulfilled by different circumstances of the life of Jesus, to David, Hezekiah, Zerubbabel, Judas Maccabæus, and others, rejecting, for the most part, all typical and secondary applications. And in this unfair and erroneous manner of interpreting prophecy, Grotius generally agrees with them, and quotes these writings as authority; although none of them were extant prior to the destruction of Jerusalem, and some of them even disagree with their oldest Targums, of which that of Jonathan, at least, was published before the coming of Christ.

Misled in this manner, even one of the clearest as well as most celebrated prophecies, contained in the fifty-second and fifty-third chapters of Isaiah, Grotius applies almost wholly to the prophet Jeremiah; nor does he ever mention the name of Christ in his notes on it, but in the first verse of the fifty-third chapter, when he says "Hæ notæ in Jeremiam congruunt

prius, sed potius in Christum," and then proceeds to explain the whole chapter as relating to Jeremiah. And this is the more extraordinary, as in his book on the Truth of the Christian Religion, published afterwards, he expressly affirms that this prophecy can agree to no one but to Christ.*

But the limits of this paper will not admit of all the passages being pointed out in which this eminent scholar contradicts himself. His work on the Truth of the Christian Religion, which was written subsequent to his Commentaries, is much more valuable than they are. It has always been much and deservedly esteemed as an excellent manual, urging in a clear, forcible, easy, and popular style, the principal arguments which establish the certainty of the divine origin of the religion of Christ; and many of these are such as he does not allow in his Commentaries to relate to him. In the fifth book of this work he mentions a very remarkable anecdote which has puzzled all his various editors, as he quotes no authority for it. He says, in speaking of the time foretold by Daniel, for the appearance of the Messiah, that it agreed so exactly with the coming of Christ, that a Jewish doctor, named Nehumias, who lived about fifty years before the birth of our Lord, said that it was impossible that the coming of the Messiah could be delayed more than fifty years from that time. Leclerc observes, in a note, that Grotius ought to have mentioned from whence he had this story; but he thinks, that in one of his letters to his brother, he says, that he was told it by

* Quis potest nominari aut regum, aut *prophetarum* in quem hæc congruunt? Nemo sane. De Veritat. Lib. V. 19.

a Jew. Dr. Jenkins, however, in his book "On the Reasonableness and Certainty of the Christian Religion," *fifth edition*, says, that Grotius took it from the Talmud, and he also refers for it to "*Surrav. Epist.*" a work with which I am entirely unacquainted. If, however, it had been in either of the Talmuds, it would hardly have escaped the researches of the learned as well as industrious Dr. Lightfoot, who makes no allusion to it. Yet it is surprising that neither Leclerc, nor his translator, Dr. Clark, should know that this circumstance is to be found at length in Purchas's Pilgrimage, p. 144, first edition, who quotes for it the authority of Petrus Galatinus, a Franciscan monk, who wrote a book against the Jews in 1520, "De Arcanis Catholicæ veritatis." But Galatinus himself is said by Moreri to have been indebted for the substance of his work to Porchet, who also borrowed it from Raymond Martin.

I have never been able to meet with any of these three last mentioned works, and shall think myself much indebted to any of your learned readers who can tell me, through you, what authority any of them give for this curious and interesting anecdote. Your deep-read correspondent who writes under the signature of *S.** may, possibly, be able to afford me this satisfaction; which would be very gratifying to many others as well as to myself.

As a conclusion I send you Grotius's Epitaph, which I copied in 1791 from his tomb at Delft, and which, I believe, has never been in print.

* This inquiry will be found answered by the above learned Correspondent S. (*viz. the late Rev. Mr. Howes of Norwich*) in the xth vol. of this work.

" *Epitaph on Grotius, at Delft, in the New Church.*

" Prodigium Europæ, docti stupor unicus orbis,
Naturæ augustum se superantis opus,
Ingenii cœlestis apex, virtutis imago,
Celsius humanâ conditione decus;
Cui peperit Libani lectos de vertice cedros,
Defensus veræ religionis honor;
Quem lauru Mavors, Pallas decoravit olivâ,
Quum bello et paci publica jura daret;
Quem Tamesis Batavæ miraclum & Sequana terræ
Vidit, & adscrivit Sueonis aula sibi,
Grotius hic situs est—tumulo discedite, quos non
Musarum & Patriæ fervidus urit amor."

Art. DCCXXXVI.

N°. XXXVII. *Story of an eccentric Character.*

" A youth, to fortune and to fame unknown:—
——And melancholy mark'd him for her own." Gray.

TO THE RUMINATOR.

Sir,

As you love to ruminate on the energies and varieties of the human character, you will not perhaps dislike the account of a very extraordinary one, that came within my observation a few years ago, of which I shall be glad if this communication draws forth any further intelligence.

In the skirts of one of our few remaining ancient forests, near which however were several venerable mansions still inhabited by respectable families, stands in a recluse dingle a solitary cottage, which

yet exhibits marks of neatness and elegance superior to its rank. I never pass this cottage without many mingled emotions of anxiety and respect. I think ten years have elapsed this very spring, since I was in the habits of meeting almost daily in its environs a young man of most interesting but neglected appearance, whose air had every appearance of education and high birth. He seemed reserved, and desirous to avoid notice; but my curiosity was awakened, and I traced him, without being seen, to this cottage, where I soon learned that he had taken up his abode.

I gradually insinuated myself into his acquaintance; and in some degree won his confidence, though there were many parts of his story, which I never could penetrate. The name he assumed was Longford; but that undoubtedly was not his real name. His countenance was uncommonly handsome, except that it was somewhat sévere and

"Sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought."

His eyes, though generally gloomy, reflected at times every variation of the soul. He was dark, tall, muscular, but rather thin; and, if his mien was too often languid, it occasionally displayed vigour and activity.

For what purpose he had sought this retreat, and whence he had immediately come, I never could entirely satisfy myself. He discovered at times the strongest marks of pride and ambition of any man with whom I have ever conversed. Indeed the fragments of mysterious story, which I gradually

extracted from him, would, if true, account for these strong traits of character.

He appeared to be labouring under some vehement disappointment; and struggling with terrific difficulties. His melancholy, though interesting, was generally painful; and seemed to depress his faculties. I have met him day after day, when he scarce spoke. Then all at once the vein of eloquence would seem to flow upon him; and he would pour forth the treasures of a mind full of sentiment and imagery, with such a felicity of expression and sweetness of voice as seemed to be little short of inspiration.

It was on one of these occasions that by good luck a friend was with me, whose prejudices had hitherto resisted all belief in my account of this wonderful young man. He was absolutely overpowered with astonishment; but, before we parted, invited him to his house with such a mixture of awe and kindness in his manner, as won its way at once to Longford's proud but grateful heart, and induced him to embrace an offer of hospitality, which in common cases he would sullenly have rejected.

' At the table of this friend I first saw him in mixed society. He did not then equal the expectations which had been formed of him: he was silent, shy, nervous, and almost awkward: in answering questions he was confused and deficient in language; and my friend almost relapsed into his former scepticism. Even his eyes lost their fire; and he looked mortified and unlike himself. Towards the close of the evening however he recovered a little; and one or two flashes restored him to my friend's good opinion.

We knew not how he employed himself in his cottage; it was probable that he read; but there were no signs of any great number of books about him. Somewhere he had certainly had an opportunity of reading; for his memory was most richly stored, particularly with history. If he had not much opportunity of reading, he certainly wrote a great deal; and I suspect was occupied in digesting some mighty plan of which his head seemed full. The common people called him "the crazy man;" and after a little while took very slight notice of his peculiarities. A villager and his wife lived under the same roof; and these appeared to be his only attendants. He was indifferent to show and luxury, and so engrossed by the internal operations of the mind, that all trivial outward circumstances were utterly unheeded by him.

But yet he was not inattentive to objects of beauty and sublimity. I never saw an eye which glowed with more fire and admiration at the scenery of Nature. His heart and fancy seemed as tremulous as the strings of the Æolian harp; and to vibrate with responsive harmony. His tongue indeed often died away in murmurs, but his countenance spoke the intenseness of his pleasure. It was generally of a solemn tone, but it now and then relaxed into a heavenly smile. He has leaned against an old tree or thrown himself on the grass for an hour together with such a radiation of face as I have no language to describe.

Though his powers seemed better adapted to a speculative than an active life, there was reason to believe that he had been engaged in enterprises

which required not a little practical exertion. He sometimes let drop expressions which implied that he had been a soldier in services of adventure and hazard. The minutiæ of the profession he despised; but he talked with fire of its greater movements; and seemed to have some project of this kind frequently floating in his head. When he talked of leading armies, and regaining kingdoms, the dark flashes of his countenance were almost frightful.

There happened to be present at one of the visits to my friend's house, a neighbour who loved to tell wonders; and who soon raised the curiosity of several of the families within his reach. By degrees most of their tables became open to Longford; but it was extremely difficult to induce him to accept invitations; and no one could ever rely on his attendance. There were people, whom no one could prevail on him to meet, and from whom, if he accidentally encountered them in a room, he instantly retired. As long as it was the fashion to have him of a party, all this was endured. He still continued, next to myself, most attached to my friend, who had an amiable family of daughters, in whose presence his frequent returns of cloudiness and depression seemed in some degree to give way.

Yet it was seldom that he spoke to them; nor would a common observer have perceived that they had any effect on his manners or his thoughts. I, who had watched him incessantly, knew better the changes of his looks, and the tones of his voice. I have seen occasionally what animation their company gave to his conversation, even in arguments and on subjects which appeared entirely addressed

to their father; and when they left the room, he has become languid; his attention lost, and his manner confused.

He had not been long known in our neighbourhood before many stories were circulated to his prejudice. He was called an adventurer; an impostor; a low fellow; a beggar; a madman, &c. Some of these things reached his ears; the words "low fellow," raised his indignation most. "I suppose," said he, "I am called low fellow by some East-Indian cut-throat, or some mongrel nobleman, whose pedigree has been sewed together from shreds of parchment by a little tailor, turned herald; who however would have got a more honest, if not a more productive livelihood, by never quitting his board! I scorn to tell what I am, in opposition to such despicable insults as these!" Sometimes however I expected that these provocations would have drawn out his real history; but they never extorted more than broken and imperfect hints. Yet I gathered that he considered himself of Blood-Royal; and that there was something very romantic in the history of his descent.

There were moments when his temper had the appearance of great harshness, and even ferocity: his resentments were strong; and his indignation was too much alive. But, after long and studious investigation, I was convinced that the excessive tenderness of his feelings was his main defect; and the source of ebullitions of temper which had the very contrary hue. Had he exercised a more constant and severe control over himself, he might have

been happier; he might have been better; but all the striking traits of his character would have been deadened.

It was almost a misfortune, that he could not at all coalesce with common minds. Animal spirits, and the liveliness of ordinary conversation overcame him so as to close his mouth, and even damp his faculties. In ordinary society indeed he seemed so far from being superior, that he rather appeared like a cypher. Smart men, jesters, and bucks of infinite humour, asked, "What dull foolish fellow is that?" When they withdrew, he seemed to rise as from an oppressive weight; his powers expanded, and he often poured forth the golden torrents of his impetuous mind.

Then it was that I observed the eyes of the gentle Ellen M———, my friend's second daughter, first fixed with an inexpressible kind of attention on Longford. She said nothing; she did not interrupt him by a remark, or a word; but I perceived she was intensely drinking poison to her future peace. I was alarmed; but knew not what to do. Had I had more firmness, I should instantly have communicated my observation to her father.

I endeavoured to withdraw Longford as much as possible from the house; but he had now contracted a fondness for the society of Mr. M———, who was equally fond of him; and I had not resolution to break this mutual enjoyment. I had formed a warm friendship for him; and as I feared the solitude of his own cottage was too much calculated to foster his alarming melancholy, I could not bring my heart to shut him out from a hospitality, which seemed to give him such keen pleasure.

The autumn was now at its most delightful point. The forest displayed all that variety of tints, from pale green to the brightest gold, which renders this the most picturesque of all the seasons. There is something in the softened gleams of the sun, and the commencing decay of vegetation, peculiarly suited to a pensive turn of disposition. It added to the disease of Ellen's heart; and it was dangerous to the violent sensibility of Longford. I saw that he was now more thoughtful than usual, and loved to wander alone in the woods more than ever. He talked less; and his sentiments betrayed less fire and energy. He sighed more; and his spirit of adventure seemed softened.

But it is become necessary to close this letter, and continue my story in another.

Art. DCCXXXVIII.

N°. XXXVII. *The same Story continued.*

"La Virginella, come la rosa,
Scopuir non osa il primo ardore." Ariosto.

TO THE RUMINATOR.

Sir,

I am not sure that Longford was a poet; but I strongly suspect that he was. He often communicated to me small poetical pieces, which, though he would not own them, I have little doubt were written by himself. They were more remarkable for a certain natural wildness of sentiment and fancy than for correctness. The introduction of those moral touches, which, springing from the fulness

of a simple and unsophisticated heart raise instantaneous sympathy, gave most of them very attractive charms.

Though Longford was at this time more than commonly affected by tenderness and anxiety, I do not think he was equally unhappy as I had seen him. His melancholy was softer and more composed. The books he borrowed of me were of a different cast, and he was more contented with his cottage, and his humble station. "I have seen the four parts of the world," said he, "and been in the most lively and bustling scenes; but I am most content with my present humble station!" "Are you, indeed," I answered, "satisfied with this obscure seclusion?". "It is the whim," he replied, "of a mind tired of show and restless action; and that prefers solitary quiet to anxious ambition and greatness!"

I am a single man; and live in a moderate sized retreat with all the conveniences of a competent fortune. My lodge stands on a most romantic knoll of the forest; encircled by a mixture of deep foliage, and opening glades. A little lawn spreads before my windows; and through one of the vistas dimly peeps a branch of the blue sea. As the rapid decline of the year brought longer evenings, and more uncertain days, I had the happiness of Longford's company more frequently by my fire-side, and found him more continual occupation in my library. I had a tolerable collection of black-letter books; and more particularly a copy of Lord Berners's Froissart. This was his favourite volume, over which he hung day after day, completely absorbed, and forgetful of

all around him. His next favourite was Philip De Commines. All the minutiæ of the court of the Plantagenets from the time of Edward III. to their extinction in Richard III. he seemed to study with enthusiastic attention.

At other times he would sit for hours at the window contemplating with apparent earnestness the golden views around him; or watching the wild deer at a distance, who grazed calmly within his sight, or darted in picturesque forms through the trees. But the coming on of twilight appeared to be his favourite hour: as evening drew its shades over the forest-scenery, the landscape inspired him with a rapturous kind of melancholy, such as I have never seen exhibited by any other human being. At the close of one of these fits of abstraction, I heard a deep sigh, and saw a tear streaming down his cheek. "Had I never," said he, "been deluded by the false fire of ambition; had I never admitted those grovelling desires of worldly distinction, I might have been happy; my mind might have been pure enough to foster these raptures without reproach or alloy! Alas! it is far otherwise now. I have been hurried into pursuits ————" Here he paused, as if he recollected himself, and after two or three efforts dropped the conversation. My curiosity was inflamed! but delicacy restrained me from urging hi further.

I will confess that, as his story was obscure, these accidental hints did not leave me at entire ease. But there was something altogether so ingenuous in his manner, and so pure in his sentiments, that I could not finally withhold my confidence from him.

Yet there were moments when it was impossible to prevent the intrusion of an idea, that I might perhaps be cherishing a man stained with some great crime, who had fled from justice, and whose conscience sometimes goaded him into these involuntary exclamations. Then I said to myself, "he is afraid of nobody; and his opinions are too upright and bold, and his countenance too full of sensibility and virtue for such base suspicions;" and I loved him the more for the injury I had done him.

But whatever uneasiness occasionally arose from the remarks I made at my own house, I found cause for much more at many little occurrences at the house of my friend M———. My friend was fatally blind to the thousand nameless looks and tones of voice between Longford and his daughter. It is true they never appeared to engage in regular conversation; nor were their addresses to each other as direct or as frequent even as to the rest of the company. This very circumstance, which set the caution of my friend asleep, rendered the matter in my judgment more serious.

Ellen M——— was then eighteen, with a beautiful person, and most intelligent and thoughtful countenance. She had always been remarkable for a grave turn, and great softness of disposition. Her love for reading had been quietly cultivated, and was much more ardent than any of her family were aware of. She was silent almost to a fault; and her diffidence entirely concealed the delightful powers of her mind. I had often suspected that beneath those pensive looks, and that unbroken reserve, there were treasures of no ordinary kind. I drew

these inferences from the wonderful varieties of expression in her face; from the fixed attention with which I observed her listen to rational and interesting conversation, and from certain silent and unassuming acts of sweetness to those whom she had an opportunity of obliging. But two of her more talkative sisters, who were yet good girls, had hitherto run away with all the credit from her.

Her cheeks had yet been adorned with a most beautiful colour; I observed that she now grew pale, and still more thoughtful than usual. Her voice, which had always been plaintive, became even tremulously low; and the tears were often rising in her eyes. She had often a book in her hand; but I saw that her thoughts were generally wandering, and that she was inattentive to the page before her. Whenever I came to the house, I had not been long arrived before Ellen entered the room; but if Longford was not with me, she soon retired; and I saw evident disappointment in her looks.

I discovered equal impatience in Longford when she was absent, and many little contrivances in the direction of his walks, of which perhaps he almost disguised the source from himself, did not escape my notice. I do not think they ever met each other by themselves; for Ellen was too delicate and fearful; she did not appear to have even hinted her attachment to Longford: but

> She "let concealment, like a worm i'the bud,
> Prey on her damask cheek,"———

A little incident however took place soon afterwards, which seemed to give a more explicit turn to

this affair. One evening, towards the end of October, when we had both dined at M———'s, something or other called us all out of the room except Ellen and Longford. By some singular luck they were left together nearly half an hour. When I returned, I found her in tears; and she instantly quitted us, and ran up stairs. I endeavoured to rally Longford a little; but found him gloomy and irritable.

Cards were called for in the evening; and Ellen, who was now at the tea table, seemed to have recovered her composure. She excused herself however from cards, and placed herself at a little table in the corner of the room. After some time I observed her deeply engaged in a book, over which she hung as if anxious to conceal its title. My curiosity was awakened; and making some pretence to speak to her, I discovered it to be *Walpole's Historic Doubts*. I believe she did not know that I had seen it; but it was a book I was so well acquainted with, that the fragment of a page betrayed it to me. I frequently saw her afterwards with this book, and could not have a doubt that her curiosity regarding it rose out of her conversation with Longford.

Ellen now for the first time began to open to me the stores of her rich mind. I found her astonishingly well read in the English history, as well as in books of taste and fancy; but more particularly inquisitive about that period, to which the *Historic Doubts* relate. The quarrels of the Houses of York and Lancaster, with their various pretensions and connections, she was accurately skilled in; and talked with an indignation totally unlike her gentle

temper against Henry the Seventh:—she loaded him with the names of Usurper, and even murderer; but would not go as far as Walpole in exculpation of Richard the Third.

Longford meanwhile seemed to sink almost uniformly into a tender melancholy; and his spirits to be softened into a sort of languor very inconsistent with the natural energy of his mind. His pride was not lessened; but it took a new turn; it made him rather waste his time in unavailing regrets at his fallen fortune, than in indignant resolutions to counteract it, and restore himself to his due place in society. He sometimes even wept, and seemed melted into feminine tenderness.

He never owned his attachment to me, but it was now so obvious that he could no longer flatter himself that I was ignorant of it. I endeavoured to discover the nature of his fortune, and expectations; but on this subject, to me at least, he preserved impenetrable secrecy. I found that at one time he had fought in the Austrian army; and was well acquainted with the military tactics of that nation; and that he seemed to have a familiar local knowledge both of North and South America, particularly the former. Indeed I still suspect that the former was the place of his nativity. I think, if he had himself been born in England, as there is every reason to believe his ancestors were of high birth in this country, I should by some means have discovered it. I once saw in his hands the outside of a MS. history of his family, which I give him full credit for being genuine; and which he assured me, if the time ever arrived for its being laid open, would astonish both

me, and the world.—Some particulars, of which he gave hints, I shall have occasion to tell, before I close this story.

Art. DCCXXXVIII.

N°. XXXIX. *The same Story continued.*

" Like one ordain'd to swell the vulgar throng,
As though the Virtues had not warm'd his breast,
As tho' the Muses not inspir'd his tongue."

SHENSTONE.

TO THE RUMINATOR.

SIR,

When we see a man whose talents are fitted to adorn and enlighten society, pining in solitude, obscurity and grief, we cannot, if we are capable of feeling or reflection, but be touched with poignant regret.

I saw during the following winter the brilliant faculties of Longford clouded with a hopeless affection, which, if it sometimes gave a grace to his melancholy, rendered him altogether languid, indolent, and almost useless. Day after day he hung immoveably over my fire immersed in thought which was only interrupted by his sighs.

When a girl is in love, and especially if she have fancy and sentiment, any thing romantic in the history of her lover, adds food to her flame. The mysteries regarding Longford seemed to heighten Ellen's attachment: and when these were added to qualities in themselves very striking and attractive, the excess of her passion can be more easily conceived than described. Mr. M——— at length took the alarm;

but the affair had now gone too far to be violently broken off. It became the painful task of a parent to inquire more minutely into the circumstances of a man who aspired to his daughter. That man was his friend; his delight as a companion; his admiration as a genius. But these were qualities which did not necessarily secure his consent to him as the husband of his child.

Longford could not bear to be questioned, or even suspected as to his story. On this subject he was so proud and indignant that it did not seem to bend even to his attachment. It often drew tears from Ellen; and he was infected with her grief, and shed tears in return. But his spirit soon rose again, and he scorned to have his tale extorted from him. "If," said he, "you can suspect me of imposition, or that I am unworthy of you, painful as it is to withdraw myself from your house, let me go! Scruples and hesitations insult me, and are unmanly in you! You may guess that the fortune of myself, and my immediate ancestors, has been under some cloud; but there is no one whom our alliance would disgrace." At this his eyes flashed fire; and he muttered in half-suppressed sentences allusions to the blood in his veins, and the cruel fate which had obscured his rights.

"My ancestors," said he, "disdaining to use their real name without being admitted to the distinctions attached to it, have long concealed their lustre under that of Longford, by which you at present know me. But I am not without hope that the time may yet arrive, when I may win my way nearer to the station that belongs to me!" Here he burst into

tears; and there was something so ingenuous and so much beyond the power of disguise in his manner, as rendered it impossible for M——— to doubt him, however strange his reserve might appear.

Of the following hasty lines I received the copy from one of Ellen's sisters. They of course speak for themselves as the production of Longord.

"*Song.*

1.

"When cross the Atlantic's roaring wave
I pass from Ellen far away,
How shall this beating bosom brave
The memory of a softer day,
As in these lovely shades I sigh,
And watch the tear of Ellen's eye?

2.

My sterner heart could once delight
In scenes of danger and of storm;
And in my country's cause to fight
Could all my proudest wishes warm;
But now no charm can joy supply,
Save the sweet smile of Ellen's eye.

3.

As fades dear Albion's chalky shore
Before my sorrow-clouded view,
What magic spell can e'er restore
Hours that with dove-wing'd motion flew?
Breezes, that into music die,
Can ne'er with Ellen's whispers vie.

4.

By Sesquehana's distant stream,
Or wild Ohio's waters lone,

How sad to waken from the dream
Of tender pleasures that are flown.
Then 'twill unman my soul to spy
Thro' fancy's beams fair Ellen's eye!

5.

In absence be the lovely maid
True to her Edmund's plighted vow,
And in the forest's peaceful shade
On him a daily thought bestow,
Till on his distant obsequy
Fall the blest tear from Ellen's eye!

6.

Alas! and shall no shores remote
This sad yet kindling breast expire,
With none, to pour the funeral note,
Of those that rais'd it's former fire;
In savage lands his bones must lie,
Far from his long-lov'd Ellen's eye!"

I am sorry, Mr. Ruminator, after having gone thus far, to be necessitated to defer to another month the conclusion of my story; but the truth is that I have been most unexpectedly interrupted.

I remain, Sir,

Your constant Reader,

H. St. F.

June, 22, 1808.

Art. DCCXXXIX.

N°. XL. *Story of an eccentric Character, continued.*

"'Twas strange they said, a wonderful discovery,
And ever and anon they vow'd revenge."

HOME.

TO THE RUMINATOR.

SIR,

LONGFORD told me one day, with eyes of fiery agony, the scandalous rumours which were abroad regarding him. He possessed in the latter period of his residence among us a horse of uncommon power and beauty; and he rode him with admirable skill and boldness. He knew all the purlieus and intricacies of the forest; and was often seen glancing with rapidity along its bye-paths to the surprise and consternation of those inhabitants, to whose occupations, obscurity and concealment were necessary. The love of adventure, the movements of an active spirit, and a fondness for the wild scenery of Nature, were the probable causes of these excursions. Even the night did not restrain him; and moonlight rides were not unfrequent. Well aware that he might meet hardy vagabonds, on whose employments he might intrude unwelcomely, and whose resentment he might incur, he went armed with a sword and pistols, which he wielded with such a fearless dexterity, as overawed those who were otherwise inclined to disturb him.

Several daring robberies had been at this time committed in the district by a person unknown. Vulgar report soon afterwards fixed them on Long-

ford. He communicated the dreadful calumny to me with a degree of agitation which alarmed me for his intellects. To me assurances of his innocence of crimes so shocking and degrading were utterly superfluous. Yet I could not conceal from him that his mysterious history would give colour to such an idea with others. Even this did not wring his secret from him. His bosom swelled; and the flame of indignation darted from his eyes. "Am I indeed sunk so low as this;" said he: and a flood of tears relieved him. "My enemies," he continued, in a more plaintive tone, "may now triumph indeed! and as I have been long surrounded by spies; and have several times nearly fallen a sacrifice to their machinations, they may now perhaps succeed in getting possession of my person, and even taking my life. My father fell a victim to their contrivances; and nothing would gratify them like extinguishing me, the last remnant of a race, whose story is a blot upon the pages of history, and the just succession of lawful governments!"

I heard these indistinct allusions with interest and awe. They were strange and wonderful. But I will confess that with all my partiality for Longford there was one suspicion which I could not entirely subdue. I doubted whether there was not in his character a mixture of insanity; and whether this was not the prevalent topic on which it hinged. It is often on one single subject that this disorder betrays itself; and there is no fancy so common in a disordered brain as its rights to a princely rank. His hints however were so rational, even on this

point, that on the whole my opinion preponderated in favour of his soundness of mind.

Great inquiries about him were now made by distant emissaries; and savage-looking runners evidently dogged his rides and walks. He saw them himself; and I saw them still oftener than he did. He felt the insult; but he was undaunted. His dauntless state of mind did not arise from ignorance of his danger: he knew it well; and was perfectly convinced that any slight colour for destroying his liberty or even his existence would be embraced. It was only when he looked on Ellen, that his heart was softened, and he wept. Neither Mr. M—— nor Ellen gave a moment's credit to the cruel attack on his character; but it materially aggravated the difficulty of a parent's determination; and wounded the delicate feelings of the daughter without diminishing her affection.

"The world," said Longford, "will smile at the assertion that there is a conspiracy carrying on against my person; and that my life is aimed at; they will consider it the whim of a heated head, or a perverse temper. I repeat the accusation; and can prove it by incontrovertible facts. You will too soon, I fear, have proofs before you, as I have had. But when I am seen here no more; when I fly from hence as the only mode of securing my freedom; and a painful existence which my duty rather than my inclination impels me to preserve, retain your confidence in me, protect my reputation, and be kind to my memory! Time will, I trust, unveil this melancholy mystery, and shew what I have been; what I am; and what I ought to be!"

He left us on the evening on which this conversation happened with more than usual gloom. His eyes had been long fixed on Ellen while his lips refused to utter a word. When he rose to take leave, the agitations of his countenance were dreadful; he cast on Ellen a look almost of despair, he pressed my hand with a tremulous fervour which I shall never forget; and he tore himself away.

We heard nothing of him for three days; on the fourth we were all looking just before the commencement of twilight on the openings of the forest from the drawing-room window, when we saw a horseman at full speed, with his sword drawn, pursued by four others; and the instant he reached some high pales that separate two divisions, and seemed an insurmountable barrier to his escape, he spurred his horse, who with a tremendous spring cleared his leap, and escaped his pursuers. Our eyes were all fixed on him; and we could hardly breathe during the tremendous suspense. Ellen, who had been gazing without the utterance of a word, screamed and fainted. And in less than ten minutes Longford, in the very dress of the horseman whom we had seen, burst into the room, and fell almost senseless into my arms.

As soon as he breathed again, he cried wildly, "Am I safe? Where is Ellen? Protect me, till I have taken my last leave of her: Give me fair play: let me fight the assassins: but do not allow them to come four upon me at once!"—His countenance shot fire; and his teeth gnashed with agony. He relapsed for a few minutes into insensibility, but gradually recovered his composure.

He told us his attackers were known desperadoes, often employed in the most daring functions of the police, but as often colouring under this mask acts of private revenge and murder, for which they are hired by enormous bribes. It is their practice to get false information lodged against the persons intended to be attacked; and thus they proceed armed with a distortion of the powers of the law. They had now been sent down from London, at an incredible expense, to take advantage of the reports of robberies committed in this neighbourhood. The same men, for they in vain attempted to disguise their persons, had once committed an assault upon him before; and had kept him in custody for six weeks, when he escaped from them by a miracle. As Mr. M—— was an intelligent, firm, and active magistrate, it was probable they might not immediately venture into his house for their purpose; but Longford had no doubt they would way-lay him in some way, from which it would be scarce possible finally to protect himself. He hinted that persons in power were his decided enemies; and would wink at no light stretch of authority to obtain the command of his person. M—— who had formed a high idea of the purity of administrations, and of the exercise of laws and institutions, would have blamed Longford for these insinuations, under less provocation. He still thought him mistaken, though he did not add to his sufferings by contradicting him.

For more than a week Longford was kept quiet in M——'s house. During this time he still made many allusions to his story without explaining it,

and persisted in his certainty of a conspiracy against him, of which there were indeed too many confirmations without doors. Wretches in disguise haunted the avenues to the house, and beset the servants and visitors. But hitherto in vain.

In the mean time Ellen's anxiety grew with her attachment: her health suffered; and even her beauty declined. She spent however those precious days principally in the company of Longford, in whose interesting manner, rich stores of knowledge, and affecting eloquence, she found new objects of admiration. With a wild fancy and an agitated heart even his confusion was frequently eloquent! the various scenes in which he had been engaged gave a romantic colour to all his allusions; and sentiments of the noblest and most glowing hues flowed from him as from a fountain. Indignant, irascible, yet instantly relenting; impetuous; daring, yet in a moment melted with tenderness; acquainted with the diversified tints of "many colour'd life," having learned to weep "at the woe of others by his own;" and deeply touched with the softest of human passions, he had within him all the ingredients that give interest and delight to the powers of conversation. Not indeed those powers which are pleasing to dull men, and mere men of business, who stared at him with a stupid wonder; and only pitied his ebullitions as the symptoms of insanity: but such as are admired by people of cultivated minds and refined dispositions.

I compassionated the situation of sweet Ellen from the bottom of my heart. Her attachment became too like idolatry; and her sublime affections

irradiated, yet wore her beautiful person. To her Longford, no doubt, communicated many particulars of his life, which he concealed from others; but I do not yet know that he gave her a perfect explanation. Her virtue was too great to permit her to fly with him, and be the partaker of his adventures; nor did he wish it. He had too many hardships and dangers to encounter, to desire that she should be a sharer of them. And he seemed perfectly convinced of the impossibility of long remaining in safety in his present situation. The idea of the separation was inexpressibly dreadful to both.

I have recovered one of his poetical addresses to Ellen on this occasion, which I will insert.

"*To E. M.*

1.

"Soft is the fairy beam that plays
Within that eye's too mournful sight;
Yet dangerous is it still to gaze
Till my soul melts in fond delight.
O hide, that lovely face,
In which entranc'd I trace
An angel's goodness with an angel's grace!

2.

Tear the delusion from my view;
Soften no more my yielding heart;
Those features of celestial hue
Raptures too high for earth impart!
For this shall I adore
A few short hours; and then deplore
Thro' all my darkening days the transient pleasure o'er!

3.

Yet cast that heavenly ray again
Upon my languishing desire;
And tho' the bliss be mix'd with pain,
Once more relume the rapturous fire!
The memory still
Of that delight will fill
My years of future gloom with many a melting thrill.

4.

O why, adown that lovely cheek,
Steals, Ellen, the contagious tear?
Does it a doubt of Longford speak?
Is it the mark of love or fear?
O let me drink those drops divine,
And, as the compact thus I sign,
E'en tho' the poison kills, a moment think thee mine!

5.

Upon my ravish'd ear bestow
The tones of that enchanting voice,
And from thy bosom's fountain throw
The treasures that my soul rejoice,
For tho' thy beauty charm,
Yet, lovelier than thy form,
Do gems of mental light thine inward spirit warm!

6.

O let me fold thee in mine arms,
And press thee to this last embrace,
Forget one moment all alarms;
And ages in that moment trace!
Then if my destiny
For ever bids me fly,
The point of earthly bliss I taste before I die!"

Art. DCCXL.

N°. XLI. *The same Story continued.*

" Thought and affliction, passion, hell itself,
She turns to favour, and to prettiness."

SHAKSPEARE.

TO THE RUMINATOR.

Sir,

Longford at length ventured to his own cottage, whence he despatched a note to M—— the next morning to announce his safe arrival. Another day passed; and a third; and all was well. On the fourth he was expected again to visit M——'s house; but he came not. Uneasiness and alarm pervaded the family: night arrived; and brought no intelligence of him. A servant was despatched to him; and returned with an account, that he had left his home in the morning to dine at M——'s; and they had not since heard of him. Day followed day; but no information of him could be procured. Every rap at the door, every tread of a horse was listened to, with a sick and fearful trembling. Ellen very soon sunk into silent and almost motionless despair.

At last a note without a postmark, and by what conveyance is unknown, reached the house. It contained these few lines in a hurried hand, and on a torn scrap of paper:

" My Dear Friend,

" I have been trepanned, imprisoned, and all but murdered: I do not yet despair: I may escape; if I do not, death will be a grateful release: tell Ellen to pray for me; and then we may both be

happy: cherish my memory, my dear friends; and if you hear no more, remember that the last dregs of the house of ——— have expired!"

From that hour no further intelligence was received of the amiable, highly-endowed, and unfortunate Longford. For a little while Ellen's gloom seemed to yield to the illusions of a fond imagination. She wandered in the wood-walks, and sat for hours in the melancholy stillness of the churchyard, talking to herself, and apostrophizing Longford's absent spirit. It was deemed most prudent to indulge her in her affecting occupations. She gathered turf, and reared a little heap which she called his grave; and steeped it continually with her tears. She decorated it almost daily with some wild poetical address, of which the following is at least rational and simple.

"*Poetical Address to a Turf, raised as a Memorial of the Grave of Longford.*

1.

"O humid Turf, didst thou indeed
The form of him I love enshroud,
Then every flower, that decks the mead,
Should of thy sacred soil be proud!

2.

And I would sit from morn till night,
And dew with tears thy fragrant heap,
And invocate each holy sprite
Round thee eternal watch to keep!

3.

Then that illumin'd restless frame
My heart would know to be at peace,

And his glad soul's immortal flame
Would from its earthly turmoils cease.

4.

Now wears away my sinking mind
Beneath Conjecture's wearying pain;
While, if to certain woe resign'd,
I could the weight of grief sustain.

5.

O Turf! on thee with fervent prayer
I kneel! if, freed from human chains,
My Longford's spirit roves in air,
O let him listen to my strains!

6.

Let him before my tranced sight
Some vision of his fate impart;
Tho' mix'd with trembling and affright,
'Twill comfort still my aching heart!

7.

Then I will soothe this feverish brain
With memory of his former love;
And calm this bosom, till again
I meet him in yon realms above!

These temporary rays of Ellen's mind however gradually faded away, and her intellects sunk into a frightful and unchanging darkness. I remember her when her wild fancy, subdued by tenderness, was in one of its sweetest humours. It was by far the most affecting sight I ever beheld; yet it approached the nearest in some of its traits to my ideas of a superior order of beings. To those who can admit beauty to be consistent with a certain degree

of paleness and languor, she was more beautiful than painter ever drew. Her brown hair fell negligently over her face and shoulders; and her wild eyes, gazing by fits as if she saw not; and then lighting up into an ineffable kind of sweetness as some soothing image crossed her mind, filled one with a mixture of love, pity, admiration, and awe, which overcame and electrified the soul. As the friend of Longford she often threw herself on my protection with such powerful appeals to my heart, that I have wept with her for hours. Then her eloquence was so touching, and the play of her ideas so unexpected and brilliant, at those short periods when the beams of hope gave elasticity to her spirits, that one was carried away into a kind of fairy-land, and listened to her as if she was inspired.

But these bright days, as I have said, lasted only a little while: the period of impenetrable gloom came, and soon ended in decay and death, before she had completed her twentieth year. I visit her grave continually; and never cease to consecrate it with my tears. My heart thrills whenever I think of her; and willingly would I suffer again the agonies I have often endured at the sight of her disorder, for the delight of hearing her voice, and beholding the charms of her inexpressibly interesting countenance. But this is a selfish wish! The dear angel is at rest; or rather enjoying that superior order of existence, for which her exquisitely fine faculties and pure heart were better adapted!

But my readers will be impatient to hear the fate of Longford! Alas! I cannot entirely satisfy them. That the same assassins, who pursued him in the

forest, bore him away by stratagem or by force cannot be doubted. That he had no means of extricating himself; or even of applying for a Habeas Corpus, supposing the arrest to have taken place under the colour of some legal process, shews the extent of the conspiracy, and the power exerted in it; and gives suspicion that persons of no mean station or opportunity were concerned in it.

It is not easy to guess how an individual, with means of worldly offence so apparently inadequate, could be an object of such strange jealousy any where. But, in all nations, there are some, whose love of revenge the laws of their country cannot restrain, or whose officiousness mistakes opportunity for right.

Longford at any rate has not yet been heard of; and I cannot flatter myself that he is any longer in existence. If he lives, it is in some remote land, where he can find no means of communication with his European friends; and where he must have endured hardships too shocking to be contemplated, if they could prevent him from writing to those who certainly possessed his highest love and esteem.

It was my intention to have closed this letter with an account of the discoveries I had made, or the suppositions I had formed regarding his earlier history. But I have just obtained important additional clues from some papers, which he had left in the hands of Ellen M——, and which have now been committed to my care and inspection. It would be impossible, without more brevity than is proper, to include what it may be interesting to relate from them in the present letter: and I have no choice

therefore but to reserve the termination of my story for another; which the lateness of the present month will not allow me time to write. H. St. F.

July 18, 1808.

Art. DCCXLI.

N°. XLII. *Complaint of a Literary Man.*

" Illi mors gravis incubat,
Qui notus nimis omnibus,
Ignotus moritur sibi." Sen.

TO THE RUMINATOR.

Sir,

To a mind like your's, constantly ruminating on the diversified and contradictory moral traits of our species, and touched with a keen sensibility at its failings and misfortunes, I feel an insurmountable impulse to open the anxieties of a melancholy and overloaded heart. If you cannot speak comfort to me, methinks* the mere act of pouring out the fulness of my mind will give me relief.

I am a man who have given up the principal part of my life to literature, which however I have done rather as an amusement than a business. I have read and written as whim directed, without any other view, than that of a pleasing occupation of my time, unless perhaps it was mingled with the hope of a reward in the acquisition of literary fame. Thus have I whiled away the vigour of my youth and my manhood; and the hour is arrived, when I

* I am happy to see this word justified in *Jamieson's* Etymological Scotch Dictionary. *Editor.*

look back on the precious time thus lost, with hesitation, regret, and a mixture even of awe and trepidation! For what are our faculties given us? Are they to end in their employment here, or in the worldly reputation they procure? These are questions which more than startle me at periods of serious thought!

I look upon the great mass of mankind, and imagine that I see them employed still more unprofitably than I am. Their amusements are more sensual; and are productive of at least as little benefit to their fellow-creatures. If it be pleaded that their habits are less solitary, they still may be more selfish. The productions of the study are capable of a wider communication, than the exertions of conversation; and surely are in general of a more refined and improving nature. These thoughts intermix some rays of comfort at such hours of gloom!

But, alas! the clouds close together again; and at moments I seem involved in impenetrable darkness. The acquisition of all I had sought for, books, knowledge, fame, I feel, like Solomon, to be *mere vanity!* The objects of my earthly idolatry, the great meteors of human genius, fade before my sight. They appear insignificant, and vapid, like myself; their talents wasted; and the monument of their works unworthy of the labour which it cost.

Does this proceed from the disease of my mind; or from a just sense of the misapplication of its powers? Does it not whisper views of fame, and reward, beyond this world? and employments directed to effects of a higher kind, as the means?

When the utmost purpose resulting from the em-

ployment of those mental faculties with which Providence has endowed us, is a barren exercise of the understanding or the fancy of others, how far short do they fall of their capabilities? They might at the same time instruct, refine, and exalt; direct the head; and elevate the heart!

Had I, instead of wasting my life in idle inquiries on trifling subjects, and idle excursions of the imagination, bent my humble talents to acquire and convey solid knowledge, and delineate the visions of a better order of existence, perhaps even I might have secured a renown, which, while it never ceased to gratify me here, might have soothed my spirit hereafter!

It is past: the flight of Time is irrevocable; books lose their zest; the charms of learning have vanished; and fame, could I grasp it, is not worth the embrace! Such at least is the present unhappy state of my mind. Can you give me peace, Mr. Ruminator? Can you dissipate these clouds? And are you subject to no similar dejections? You seem to pursue your course without interruption through fair weather and foul! But perhaps I know not your difficulties. Like me, you may feel languor, disgust, despondence! O, Sir, how much luckier than I, are you then, who do not stop as I have done!

"Tu ne cede malis; sed contra audentior ito!"

I am, Sir,

Your constant reader,

Homuncio Literarius.

August 8, 1808.

To a mind in the state of my Correspondent's, it would be presumption in me to enlarge on the obvious and only topics of consolation. I leave it to the accomplished and eloquent divine, to delineate in their full force the comforts of religion; to point out the views, which never lose their lustre, and the wreath of which the flowers never fade. These and these alone will be powerful enough to counteract the disease, which the present letter so pathetically delineates; and which I myself, alas! have felt too deeply to be insensible to the sufferings of my Correspondent.

Aug. 11, 1808. RUMINATOR.

ART. DCCXLII.

No. XLIII. *Poetical Fragments.*

——" Minuentur atræ
Carmine curæ." HOR.

THE following poetical fragments, found among the papers of an eminent literary person, lately deceased, may for once be allowed in combination to form a paper of the Ruminator.

I will not venture to say that they have never been printed before, though I do not recollect to have met with them.

" *Thoughts occasioned by the Funeral of the Earl and Countess of Sutherland, 1766, at the Abbey of Holy-rood-House. By the late Sir Gilbert Elliot, Bart.*

" See where the Forth, by many a winding shore,
Still undiminish'd, holds his way, and see

Yon mountain hoar, a stranger to decay,
Still as of old, o'erlooks the walled city,
Her dwellings, spires, and rocky battlement;
E'en that proud palace, rear'd by human toil,
Still braves the stroke of time, though long untrod
The paved court, and silent be the hall.
These all remain: yet in the mouldering vault
Sleep Scotland's boasted kings, their ancient line
Extinct, and all their long-descended sway
Shrunk to this little measure. O! farewel,
Farewel, ye mighty names, for high exploit
And warlike prowess fam'd; entreated oft,
And oft assail'd by French or English monarch.
Such are thy triumphs, and thy victory such,
O Death, relentless! whom no charm can sooth,
Thy valour, Bruce, nor all the civil lore
Of the first James, nor Mary's matchless bloom.
Ill-fated Queen! Then wipe your tears away:
I'll weep no more: let the long funeral pass,
And darken all around: I'll weep no more.—
True, they were young; and noble was thy birth,
O Sutherland! and in thy manly mind,
An inmate there, was seated sweet affection.
Yet wherefore mourn? In pity heav'n bestow'd
An early doom: lo! on the self-same bier
A fairer form, cold by her husband's side,
And faded every charm; she died for thee,
For thee, her only love. In beauty's prime,
In youth's triumphant hour, she died for thee.
Bring water from the brook, and roses spread
O'er their pale limbs: for ne'er did wedded love
To one sad grave consign a lovelier pair,
Of manners gentler, or of purer heart!
Nor man alone decays: this antique tomb,

Where, mix'd with kings, they lie, yon mountain hoar,
And rocky battlement, one awful day,
Shall give to ruin; while alone survives,
Bright and unquenchable, the vital flame,
Portion of Heaven's own fire, which once illum'd
High-minded virtue, or with milder glow
Warm'd the pure breast of lovers and of friends."

" *The Ballad of Shinkin, with a Latin and Greek Translation.*

" Of a noble race was Shinkin,
Of the line of Owen Tudor;
But hur renown is fled and gone,
Since cruel love pursued hur.

Fair Winny's eyes bright shining,
And lily-breasts alluring,
Poor Shinkin's heart with fatal dart
Have wounded past all curing.

Hur was the prettiest fellow
At stool-ball and at cricket;
At hunting-race, or foot-ball chace,
Gods splut, how hur could kick it!

But now all joys are flying,
All pale and wan hur cheeks too;
Hur heart so akes, hur quite forsakes
Hur herrings and hur leeks too.

No more shall sweet Metheglin
Be drank at good Montgomery;
And if love's sore last six days more,
Adieu, cream cheese and flummery!"

"Præclarus ortu Shenkin
E Stirpe Theodori;
Sed cessit a Me Splendor Famæ
Venereo Furori.

Splendentis Winifridæ
Ocelli perculère;
Cor (heu!) crudeli jctu teli
Desperat Ars mederi.

Tam clarus erat nemo
Seu Pili, seu Bacilli;
Cursu pedestri, aut equestri,
Haud quisquam compar illi.

Sed gaudia fugerunt,
Emaciantur Genæ;
Cor (heu!) sic dolet, non, ut solet,
Jam cepe olet benè.

Non posthac deglutienda
Promulsis de Montgomery;
Si desit quies plus sex dies,
Æternum valeat Flummery."

" Περικλειης ην Χιγκιν,
Θεοδωριδης γενος;
αλλ' υη ερωτος ημιθρωτος,
ου νεν, ηδ' εκει μενος.

Καλλιστης Ουνιφριδης
'Οφθαλμω ωυρος μεστω,
την καρδιην ηασατην
ωτειλη ανηκεστω.

Παλαι μων εν αγωσι
ωαντ' αθλα λαβειν δικη,

τω γαρ τρεχοντι, η βαλλοντι,
αει ωαρην η νικη.

Νυν δ'εν αυτε ωαρειαις
ιδε το χλωρον τοδε.
Καρδι αλγει, τυρον μισει,
Κρομμυα δ' εκ ευωδη.

Υδρομελι εκετι
ωιειται εν Μοντγομερι.
Καν η φλοξ δεινη εξημαρ μεινη,
το λοιπον χαιρε, φλεμερι."

"*Hymn by the late Duchess of Devonshire. Æt.* 13.

"When I behold with wond'ring eyes
The daily blessings God bestows,
A thousand thankful thoughts arise;
My heart with grateful joy o'erflows.

Each flower, each shrub, conspires to sing
The praises of the God on high;
The praises of the eternal King,
Who gave each shrub, each flow'r, its dye.

Who gave the sun its balmy heat?
Who bids the thunder loudly roll?
Who made the universe complete,
And form'd the earth from pole to pole?

With me in Hellelujahs join
To sing our holy Maker's praise;
In choral hymn, or song divine,
In prayer and thanks our voices raise."

Art. DCCXLIII.

N°. XLIV. *On the Latin Poems of Cowley.*

" Quod dedisti
Viventi decus, atque sentienti,
Rari post cineres habent poetæ." Mart.

The Latin poems of Cowley,* which are not printed among the common editions of his works, are not so well known as they ought to be. Dr. Johnson and T. Warton† differ in the degree of their merit; but it must be admitted that they discover great skill in the Latin language, as well as great genius.

I think some of my readers will not be displeased at having two or three of them again brought into notice. I embrace the opportunity more willingly, because I have heard it objected, I think, with too narrow views, that my ruminations are not sufficiently confined to subjects of literature. Limits I

* First printed 1668, 8vo. in which are included *Plantarum Libri Duo*, which had been printed *Lond.* 1662, 8vo. The title of the second edition runs thus: *Abrahami Couleii Angli, Poemata Latina: in quibus continentur Sex Libri Plantarum, viz. Duo Herbarum, Florum, Sylvarum; et unus Miscellaneorum.*

Habeo quod carmine sanet & herbis. *Ovid Metam.* 10.

Huic editioni secundæ accessit Index Rerum antehac desideratus. Londini typis M. Clarke, Impensis Jo. Martyn, ad Insigne Campanæ in Cœmeterio D. Pauli 1678. 8vo.

† See Johnson's Lives of the Poets, and Warton's Preface to Milton's Juvenile Poems.

have always imposed on myself, which have restrained me from discussing many topics of life and manners, that would both have been pleasing to myself, and have given a greater diversity to my pages. But there are those who would confine me within bounds, to which I cannot submit to be chained.

Cowley is never more eloquent than when he descants on the pleasures of Solitude, whether in Latin or English.

" *Solitudo.*

" Rura laudamus merito poetæ,
Rure floremus; dominoque laurum
Sole gaudentem necat oppidorum
Nubilus aër.

Nam prius crescet seges in plateis,
Et coronabunt fora densa flores
Sponte nascentes, prius ipsa civis
Fiet et herba;

Urbe quam surgat media bonorum
Carminum messis; bona semper urbem
Carmina oderunt, neque nutrit omnis
Omnia tellus.

Rure, Persarum veluti tyrannus,
Abditus longo maneam recessu,
Sæpe legatum satis est ad urbem
Mittere carmen.

Arbores salvete, bonæque sylvæ,
Civitas fælix avium innocentum!
Regna Musarum! sacra rusticantum
Villa Deorum!

Hic jacens vestris temere sub umbris,
Audiam supra Zephyros volantes,
Cumque fœcundis bene disputantes
Frondibus auras.*

O sacrum risum juvenilis anni!
Cum Calor totos penetrans per artus
Fertilem pubem, Veneremque adulti
Suscitat orbis.

Hic mihi æstivo domus apta sole,
Pulchra naturæ domus architectæ!
Quis trabem excisam prius æstimabit
Arbore vivâ? †

Audiam hic proni per aprica collis
Luce turgentes liquidisque gemmis,
Dulce ridentes properare rivos,
Dulce loquentes. ‡

* This is a translation of some beautiful lines in his English poem on Solitude.

"Here let me, careless and unthoughtful lying,
Hear the soft winds above me flying,
With all their wanton boughs dispute."

† "Here Nature does a house for me erect,
Nature, the wisest architect,
Who those fond artists does despise,
That can the fair and living trees neglect;
Yet the dead timber prize." *Ibid.*

‡ "A silver stream shall roll his waters near,
Gilt with the sunbeams here and there;
On whose enamel'd bank I'll walk,
And see how prettily they smile, and hear
How prettily they talk." *Ibid.*

Esse qui secum nequit occupatus,
Aut laborabit miser ille vitæ
Tædio, aut caras male collocabit
Prodigus horas.*

Tu Deum longis comitata sæclis
Sola tu rerum, sacra Solitudo,
Antequam trunco numerorum abiret
Arbor ab uno!†.

Impetus mentis nimium evagantes
Instar aurigæ cohibes periti,
Et jubes pulchrum breviore gyro
Claudere cursum‡.

Languidos mentis fluidæ calores,
Et nimis multum spacii occupantes
Rite constringensque fovensque pulchros
Elicis ignes.§

* "Ah wretched and too solitary he,
Who loves not his own company!
He'll feel the weight of't many a day,
Unless he call in sin or vanity
To help to bear't away." *Ibid.*

† Tho' God himself, thro' countless ages, thee
His sole companion chose to be,
Thee, sacred solitude, alone,
Before the branchy head of numbers three
Sprang from the trunk of one." *Ibid.*

‡ "Thou, tho' men think thine an unactive part,
Dost break and tame th' unruly heart,
Which else would know no settled place,
Making it move well-manag'd by thy art,
With swiftness and with grace." *Ibid.*

§ Thou the faint beams of reason's scatter'd light
Dost like a burning glass unite,
Dost multiply the feeble heat,
And fortify the strength, till thou dost bright,
And noble fires beget." *Ibid.*

Quid mihi æterno populum, fluentem
Fonte, Londinum, numerosque jactas?
Quid mihi ingentes nihil invidenti
Objicis arces?

Eximam stultos numero tuorum,
Eximam densum genus improborum,
Vicus obscurus prope, Solitudo,
Tuo quoque fies." *

The following ode is, with one or two transpositions, a literal version of the poet's beautiful English lines in the Essay "on the Shortness of Life and Uncertainty of Riches," beginning

"Why dost thou heap up wealth which thou must quit?"

"Ode.

"Quid relinquendos, moriture, nummos,
Sarcinas vitæ, fugiture, quæris?
Si relinquendos; dominum relinquunt
Sæpe priores.

Quid struis pulchros thalambs in altum
Membra sub terrâ positurus ima?
Conserens hortos, sed in omne tempus
Ipse serendus?

* "Whilst this hard truth I teach, methinks, I see
The monster London laugh at me;
I should at thee too, foolish city,
If it were fit to laugh at misery;
But thy estate I pity!
Let but the wicked men from out thee go,
And all the fools that crowd thee so,
Ee'n thou, who dost thy millions boast,
A village less than Islington wilt grow,
A solitude almost." *Ibid.*

Nam tuas te res agitare credis ?
Esse te frugalem ? aliis laboras
Servus infælix, aliena curas
Ardelio ingens.

Longa momento meditantur unо,
Dum senes rebus venientis ævi
Lineæ puncto brevis in supremo
Acrius instant.

Jure formicæ cumulant acervos
Providæ, et brumæ memores futuræ,
Sed male æstivas eadem deceret
Cura cicadas.

Gloriæ mendax nitor atque honorum
Posset excusare suos amantes,
Si diem vitæ valuisset, uti sol,
Pingere totum.

At brevem post se sonitum relinquens
Fulguris ritu, simul ac videtur
Transit, illustri loca multa inaurans
Non sine damno.

O rudis pulchræ prope contuenti
Scena fortunæ ! Mala fastuosa
Ore larvato ! Lachrymæque pictæ
Iridis instar !

Magna contemnens, miseranosque magnos,
Invidens nullo, minimo invidendus,
Vive, Coulei ; lege tuta parvâ
Littora cymbâ.

Hospitem cœlorum, imitare alaudam,
Sis licet nubes super ire cantu
Doctus, in terris humilem memento
Ponere nidum."

Art. DCCXLIV.

N°. XLV. *The same subject continued.*

" A nostris procul est omnis vesica libellis,
Musa nec insano syrmate nostra tumet." Mart.

Having in my last paper given Cowley's Latin versions of his odes on Solitude and Riches, I now proceed to insert his version of his beautiful *Hymn to Light*, whence Warton has extracted stanzas, which furnish him with instances of our poet's inferiority to Milton in classical purity. But perhaps the ingenious critic's zeal for Milton has made him a little too severe on his rival. If he has made a bold and perhaps rash endeavour to clothe his metaphysical conceits in the Latin language, and has sometimes failed accordingly, he has surely sometimes succeeded beyond all hope; there are passages, in which his happiness appears to me really astonishing; and though Johnson went a little too far on the occasion, there is certainly great acuteness in his remarks; and there is, I think, more originality in the Latin poems of Cowley than of Milton. There are many passages in the following ode which affect me with exquisite pleasure.

Hymnus, in Lucem.

" Pulchra de nigrâ sobole parente,
Quam Chaos fertur peperisse primam,
Cujus ob formam bene risit olim
Massa Severa!

Risus O terræ sacer et polorum!
Aureus vere pluvius tonantis!
Quœque de cœlo fluis inquieto
Gloria rivo!

O salus rerum, et decus omne, salve;
Vita naturæ vigil actuosæ!
Omnium mater bona cum calore
Juncta marito!

Unde, momento, quibus e pharetris
Tela per totum jacularis orbem?
Præpotens, divesque Deique verbum
Fassa paternum!

Carceres ipsos simul, atque metam
Linquis, attingisque, animi sagittis
Ocyor strictes, rapidâ angelorum
Ocyor alâ.

Aureo lunæ bene læta curru
Auream astrorum peragrare sylvam, et
Vere nocturno reparata semper
Visere prata,

Regiam gaudens habitare solis
More in æternam Sythico vagantem, et
Divitem mundi redeunte gyro
Ducere pompam;

Inter et tantos humilis triumphos
Vermium dignata animare caudas,
Pauperes dignata hilarare parvâ
Lampede vepres.

Discolorato glomerans racemo
Turba pictorum vaga somniorum
Avolat; mixtas sine more formas
Trudit et urget.

Quin et obscenas repetunt latebras
Sœcla serpentum male consciorum,
Nec tibi natura pudens sinistrum
Objicit omen.

Ad tuos quondam Dolor ipse vultus
Fertur invitam recreasse frontem;
Cura subrisit, pepulitque rugas
Ore maligno.

Ad tuos quondam Timor ipse vultus
Exculit turpem genubus tremorem;
Pallor ignescit; capite insolenti
Cornua vibrant.

Inverecundi Dominator oris
Te tamen testem metuit Cupido;
Flamina cognatis rotat in tenebris
Sordida fumo.

Tu, Dea, Eoi simul atque cœli
Exeris pulchrum caput e rosetis,
In tuas laudes volucrum canoris
Personat hymnis.

Aula gaudentis reserata mundi;
Spectra discedunt, animæque noctis,
Vana discedunt que tenebrionum
Monstra Deorum.

Te bibens arcus Jovis ebriosus
Mille formosos revomit colores,
Pavo cœlestis; variamque pascit
Lumine caudam.

In Rosâ pallam indueris rubentem,
In croco auratum indueris lacernam,
Supparum gestas quasi nuda rallum
Lilia complens.

Fertilis Floræ sobolem tenellam
Purpurâ involvis violas honestâ
Veste segmentata operis superbas
Larga Tulippas.

Igne concreto fabricata Gemmas
Floreum immisces solidumque fucum;
Invidet pictus; fragilesque damnat
Hortus honores.

Parcior fulvis utinam fuisses
Diva largiri pretium metallis!
Parcior, quantis hominum allevasses
Pectora curis!

Mî quidem solis nitor, et diei
Innocens fulgor magis allubescit,
Pars quota humani generis sed aurum
Non tibi præfert!

Ætheris gyros per inexplicatos,
Aeris campos per et evolutos,
Æquoris per regna laboriosi
Flumine vivo.

Lucidum trudis properanter agmen,
Sed resistentum super ora rerum
Leniter stagnas, liquidoque inundas
Cuncta colore.

At mare immensum, oceanusque lucis
Jugiter cœlo fluit empyræo,
Hinc inexhausto per utrumque mundum
Funditur ore."

It may be acceptable to some of my readers to transcribe the poet's epitaph in Westminster Abbey,

as it is not inserted in the common accounts of his life.

" Epitaphium
Autoris
In Ecclesia D. Petri apud Westmonasterienses
Sepulti
ABRAHAMUS COULEIUS.

Anglorum Pindarus, Flaccus, Maro,
Deliciæ, Decus, Desiderium Ævi sui,
Hic juxta situs est.
Aurea dum volitant late tua scripta per orbem,
Et famâ æternam vivis, Divine Poeta,
Hic placidâ jaceas requie: Custodiat urnam
Cana Fides, vigilentque perenni lampade Musæ;
Sit sacer iste locus; nec quis temerarius ausit
Sacrilegâ turbare manu venerabile Bustum.
Intacti maneant; maneant per sæcula dulcis
COULEII cineres, serventque immobile saxum.
Sic vovetque
Votumque suum apud Posteros sacratum esse voluit,
Qui viro incomparabili posuit sepulchrale marmor,
GEORGIUS DUX BUCKINGHAMIÆ,

Excessit e vitâ Anno Ætatis suæ 49° et honorificâ pompâ elatus ex Ædibus Buckinghamianis, viris illustribus omnium ordinum exequias celebrantibus sepultus est die 3° M. Augusti, Anno Domini 1667."

ART. DCCXLV.

N°. XLVI. *Armorial Bearings on the Shields of the Grecian Chiefs, as described by Æschylus.*

" Εσχηματισται δ' ἀλπις ἀ σμικρον τροπον."
ÆSCHYL.

TO THE RUMINATOR.

SIR,

A FRIEND the other day pointed out to me several passages in Æschylus, which rather surprised me,

and have much engaged my attention. Some articles in the late numbers of your Censura have induced me to make these passages the subject of a letter for your Ruminator, which professes to admit topics of criticism as well as moral Essays.

The origin of heraldry has been a point of long and tedious dispute among a particular class of antiquaries; into which I shall refrain from entering. I may, however, slightly hint, that it is now generally admitted, on the soundest authorities, that arms, considered as hereditary marks appropriate to the shields of particular families, and modified in their formation by rules of blazonry, certainly did not exist before the age of Charlemagne; and in England, did not prevail till after the Norman Conquest; nor were generally settled, even among the nobles and greater gentry, till nearly two centuries afterwards.*

With this conviction, I confess I felt a momentary astonishment, when my friend produced Æschylus's description of the figures painted on the shields of some of the Grecian heroes. It must be admitted, that they appear very like a modern coat of arms. These passages are alluded to by Spelman; but as I do not recollect seeing them copied into any treatise of heraldry, I think the transcript of them will be curious to many of your readers. They are to be found in the tragedian's ΕΠΤΑ ΕΠΙ ΘΗΒΑΙΣ.

* The authority on which I most pin my faith, is Sir Henry Spelman's excellent treatise, entitled *Aspilogia*; but see also the *Historical Inquiry* in *Edmondson*, written by Sir Joseph Ayloffe; and see *Dallaway's Inquiry*, 4to. 1793. The *Tabula Eliensis*, for which see *Fuller's Church History*, and *Bentham's Ely*, I cannot believe to be genuine.

First, the shield of TYDEUS.

Εχει δ' υπερφρον σημ' επ' ασπιδος τοδε, *line* 389.
Φλεγονθ' 'υπ' αστροις ϰρανον τετυγμενον'
Λαμπρα δε πανσεληνος εν μεσῳ σαϰει,
Πρεσβιστον αστρον, νυϰτως οφθαλμος, πρεπει.

Viz. " He bears this proud impression on his shield, the heaven flaming with stars; and in the midst is conspicuous a splendid full moon, the eye of night, and the most venerable of stars (*i. e. in modern blazon, semèe of stars, and a moon in her complement, Arg.*)

Second, CAPANEUS.

Εχει δε σημα, γυμνον ανδρα πυρφορον, 433.
Φλεγει δε λαμπας δια χερων 'ωπλισμενη'
Χρυσοις δε φωνει γραμμασι ΠΡΗΣΩ ΠΟΛΙΝ'

Viz. " He bears in his shield a naked man, bearing in his hand a naked torch, with this inscription in golden letters: I WILL BURN THE CITY."

Third, ETEOCLES.

Εσχηματισται δ' ασπις ε σμιϰρον τροπον. 467.
Ανηρ δ' 'οπλιτης ϰλιμαϰος προσϐασεις
Ζτειχει προς εχθρων πυργον, εϰπερσαι θελων,
Βοᾳ δε χ'ϰτος γραμματων εν ξυλλαϐαις,
Ως ϰδ' αν Αρης σφε εϰϐαλοι πυργωματων'

Viz. " His shield is marked in no common manner; for a man in armour is attacking the tower of the enemy upon the steps of a scaling ladder, and exclaiming, ' Even Mars himself shall not expel me from the walls.' "

Fourth, HIPPOMEDON.

Ο σηματεργος δ' ε τις ευτελης αρ' ην, *line* 493.
Ος τις τοδ' εργον ωπασε προς ασπιδι,
Τυφων ιεντα πυρπνοον δια στομα
Λιγνυν μελαιναν, αιολην πυρος κασιν·
Οφεων δε πλεκταναισι περιδρομον κυτος
Προσηδαφισται κοιλογαστορος κυκλε·

Viz. "It was a skilful workman who made this engraving on his shield; a Typhæus vomiting flames from his mouth, within a border of twisted serpents."

Fifth, HYPERBIUS.

Υπερβιω δε Ζευς πατηρ επ' ασπιδων 514.
Θεας. Ο μεν γαρ πυρπνοον Τυφων εχει·

Viz. "On the shield of Hyperbius is placed the image of Jupiter Stator, bearing in his hand a flaming javelin."

Sixth, PARTHENOPÆUS.

Σφιγγ' ωμοσιτον προσμεμηχανευμενην 534.
Γομφοις ευημα, λαμπον εκκρεστρον δεμας.
Φερει δ' υφ' αυτε φοτα Καδμειων ενα.

Viz. "He bears a sphinx devouring raw flesh, with a Theban beneath her feet."

Seventh, AMPHIAREUS.

He bore no figure on his shield.

Eighth, POLYNICES.

Διπλεν τε σεμα προσμεμηχανευμενον.
Χρυσηλατον γαρ ανδρα τευχηστην ιδειν
Αγει γυνη τις σωφρονως ηγεμενη.
Δικη δ' αρ ειναι φησιν, ως τα γραμματα
Λεγει. ΚΑΤΑΞΩ Τ' ΑΝΔΡΑ ΤΟΝΔΕ, ΚΑΙ ΠΟΛΙΝ.
ΕΞΕΙ, ΠΑΤΡΩΩΝ ΔΩΜΑΤΩΝ Τ' ΕΠΙΣΤΡΟΦΑΣ.*

* The Edition of Æschylus used is the German one of Schultz 2 vols, 8vo, 1782.

Viz. "He bore a double impress, Justice leading a man in golden armour, with this motto: "I WILL BRING BACK THIS MAN, AND HE SHALL POSSESS THE CITY AND HIS PATERNAL MANSION."

Potter in his excellent translation of this play of "*The Seven Chiefs against Thebes*," says in the preface, "The shields of six of these chiefs are charged with armorial bearings expressive of their characters, and as regular, as if they had been marshalled by an herald at arms.

The origin of these insignia is not known; but we have here a proof of their high antiquity; they were borne as marks of noble descent, or illustrious action, and as such, were of distinguishing honour: but should they, in the ambitious meanness of future times (this age is too pure to admit of such a prostitution), be *assumed* by such as are neither distinguished by high birth nor virtuous action, by such as owe their wealth to the wantonness of fortune, or to deeds that deserve a different kind of elevation, they must necessarily suffer great *abatement of honour*, and the proud *achievements* of virtue sink into *common charges*." *

* I take the opportunity of this note to mention a curious coat of more modern times; no less than that of *Joan of Arc.*

These arms, *Azure, a sword in pale, the point upwards, argent crossed and pommelled, Or, between two fleurs de lis, and surmounted of a crown, all of the third*, were granted to her by Charles VII. in the year 1430, together with letters of nobility; and they were to descend in her family, even in the female line: but they were afterwards deprived of this privilege.

I am not sure where I met with this circumstance, which is not mentioned by Moreri; but I think I extracted it from *Jean de Serres*, a respectable old French historian.

Art. DCCXLVI.

N°. XLVII. *Extracts from Kirke White.*

"Heu pietas, heu prisca fides." VIRG.

TO THE RUMINATOR.

Sir,

I EARNESTLY entreat for admission, among your Ruminations, of a few extracts from Kirke White.

His Letters (as Mr. Southey well observes), show him to have possessed "as pure a heart, as ever it pleased the Almighty to warm with life." How amiable is the following passage, though for reasons inscrutable to us, its pleasing anticipation was not permitted to be realized.

"In contemplating my ministerial career, I regard myself as the father of a little flock; I wish to be happy with my people, like one family, and to love them as my children. I would strive to know them all, to deserve their confidence, and to become their intimate and associate; still I should wish to have much time for meditation, and to perform my duties in that calm and uniform series, which tranquillizes and lightens the spirit, and enables it to enjoy a close communion with its God; so that my instructions should extend beyond the sound of my voice, and the light of God's especial grace should be communicated in my writings to ages yet unborn."

What praiseworthy fortitude is exhibited in the passage which follows:

"Make me an outcast, a beggar; place me a barefooted pilgrim on the top of the Alps or the

Pyrenees, and I should have wherewithal to sustain the spirit within me, in the reflection that all this was as but for a moment; that a period would come, when wrong and injury, and trouble, should be no more. Are we to be so utterly enslaved by habit and association, that we shall spend our lives in anxiety and bitter care, only that we may find a covering for our bodies, or the means of assuaging hunger? for what else is an anxiety after the world?"

In his poetical pieces, is the following fine picture of genius in distress:

"Mark his dew'd temples, and his half-shut eye,
His trembling nostrils, and his deep-drawn sigh,
His mutt'ring mouth contorted with despair,
And ask if genius could inhabit there.

Oh yes! that sunken eye with fire once gleam'd,——
And rays of light from its full circle stream'd!
But now neglect has stung him to the core,
And Hope's wild raptures thrill his breast no more."

The penultimate line occurs again in the ode to Lord Carlisle, and it is to be feared was drawn too truly from the life.

The following is an extract from the Essays entitled "Melancholy Hours:"

"If I am destined to make any progress in the world, it will be by my own individual exertions. As I elbow my way through the crowded vale of life, I will never, in any emergency, call on my selfish neighbour for assistance. If my strength give way beneath the pressure of calamity, I shall sink without *his* whine of hypocritical condolence:

and if I do sink, let him kick me into a ditch, and go about his business. I asked not his assistance while living—it will be of no service to me when dead." P. J.

Art. DCCXLVII.

N°. XLVIII. *Original Poems by Mr. Capel Lofft.*

" Jam senior, sed cruda viridisque senectus." Virg.

" Song soothes our pains, and age has pains to soothe." Young.

For the principal contents of the present paper I am indebted to the kindness of Mr. Capel Lofft, whose name is too well known in the literary world to require any eulogy from me. Whoever knows how to appreciate duly the qualities of the human mind, will admire that constant activity and energy of its powers, which enables this learned and ingenious author to employ them so unweariedly in composition. As the business, the cares, and evils of life come upon us, we are too apt to suffer our thoughts to become weakened and distracted; and are too much inclined to prefer the ease of languid idleness to fame, which must be purchased by unprofitable toils. That noble fire from heaven, which prompts us

" To scorn delights, and live laborious days,"

too frequently sinks with our youth, and almost expires before the termination of our middle age.

It has been lamented, how common it is to see genius " consume itself by its own blaze." The

high degree of sensibility, which is at once its glory and its disease, renders its operations so perpetually liable to derangement, that it can seldom act with the steady pace of a more calm and sluggish temperament. It shrinks from every rude touch like the sensitive plant: and the most trifling incident, an unkind word, or disagreeable letter, like the spell of the evil necromancer, can, in an instant, turn Elysian gardens, and golden visions, into barren and frowning deserts.

However I may differ from a large portion of our professional censors, I shall never cease to think that the highest products of the mind are formed from the mingled ingredients of the head and the heart. Whoever therefore can properly regulate, without destroying or damping, those finer feelings which give the most beautiful and attractive colours to the effusions of the poet or the moralist, possesses a rare and enviable degree of self-command, capable of the most meritorious efforts!

The desire of recording and communicating the refined, the virtuous, or exalted sentiments, which swell the bosom, is an impulse very generally experienced, and implanted in our natures for the most benevolent purposes. But between the wish and the fulfilment of this impulse, how many difficulties intervene! To what numbers may we apply the enchanting words of Thomson in his inimitable *Castle of Indolence.*

> Tho' "oft the heavenly fire, that lay conceal'd
> Beneath the sleeping embers, mounted fast,
> And all its native light anew reveal'd;
> Oft as he travers'd the cerulean field,

And mark't the clouds that drove before the wind,
Ten thousand glorious systems would he build,
Ten thousand great ideas fill'd his mind;"
Yet "with the clouds they fled, and left no trace behind!"

To form splendid day-dreams, and to delineate as well as form them, require very different degrees of exertion, and indeed of power! These airy phantasies too often elude the grasp, and vanish in the very act of embracing them, even when we strive to retain them; an effort which is made by very few; and which is too frequently interrupted and dropped, even when, if pursued, it would have terminated in success! If there are many who scribble without the proper talents, how many gems are there buried in the ocean; and how many flowers, whose sweetness has been wasted in the desert air!

They who recollect the various productions of Mr. Lofft for the last thirty years will know how to value those which follow.

"I. On Akenside.

Quinqain. Lyric.

1.

"O Akenside divine!
Not only to the strain,
Round which Imagination's train
Their brightest wreaths and happiest tones combine,
Shall my enraptur'd ear incline;
But my eye wander o'er thy lyric chain
Perplext to sight profane,
Form'd round the hallow'd few its sacred bands to twine.

2

Not even Pindar's lay
Winds free harmonious way,
Fraught with diviner tints, sublimer airs;
Nor beams with purer ray,
Nor from the bowers of bliss more heavenly fragrance
Far above sordid cares, [bears;
And meaner joys, the soul raising to purest day."

C. L. Sept. 4, 1808.

"II. My Flageolet.

" Lov'd Flageolet, whose tone
Breathes to myself alone,
Nor dare I trust thy voice to other ears,
E'en half asham'd to own
That thy imperfect moan,
Wak'd by my touch unskill'd, thee to my heart endears!

2.

Though not the force and fire
Of the sonorous lyre,
The tender viol's finely varied sound,
Nor tones, which from the soul-enchanting wire
Of the piano steal, in thee are found,
Light simple instrument—yet bound
Within like slender space the breath did once inspire
Of Goldsmith, of Rousseau, the happy groups around.

C. L. Sept. 4, 1808.

"III. On Music.

" Clementi! Power there is in charming sounds
To soothe, exalt, and purify the mind,
When their melodious way graceful they wind,
And harmony the perfect measure bounds.

Not to the ear alone delight redounds:
The heart, the soul, such notes symphonious find;
The brow of Melancholy these unbind,
Whom with her frensied train Despair surrounds.
To Man the universal language speaks;
And breathes of sentiment the angelic voice;
Here every good affection feels her tone:
Beasts soften'd hear; the tuneful birds rejoice:
And, sweet PIANO, since thy touch is known,
Not the mild blush of May so lovely breaks!"

C. L. Sept. 9, 1808.

"IV. TO SPAIN,

On her present arduous struggle.

" O generous Nation, to whose noble boast,
Illustrious Spain, the Providence of Heaven
A radiant sky of vivid power hath given,
A land of flowers, of fruits profuse; an host
Of ardent spirits: when deprest the most,
By great enthusiastic impulse driven
To deeds of highest daring! May no leaven,
(If Wisdom, Justice fail thee, thou art lost!)
No treachery, no cruelty disgrace
Thy dawn of Freedom, if a dawn it be!
O think of thy Cervantes! think that now
No palm invites thee of false chivalry;
But one his high-soul'd breast would hail with ardent vow!"

C. L. July 6, 1808.

"V. SONNET.

To the Sea. By the Sea Side, Sept. 29, 1808.

"Βη δ' ακεὼν παρα θινα πολυφλοισβοιο θαλασσης."

HOM. IL. I. 33.

"Thou awful Sea! upon this shingly beach
Of Aldborough I pace! My gazing eye
Thy world of waters lost in the dim sky
Admiring, and thy echoing waves; that teach
In voice of thunder more than tongue can preach,
The knell of ages past and passing by:
And claim their ancient empire of the dry
And solid earth, each animating each.
Of towns long sunk, o'er which thy wild waves roar,
Of sea to land, of land to ocean turn'd,
I muse: and mourn, that who could amplest pour
Homeric tones on thy resounding shore,
PORSON, is dead!—That sea of Grecian lore
Unbounded, in the abyss of fate inurn'd!" C. L.

ART. DCCXLVIII.

N°. XLIX. *Greek Ode on Eton. By Mr. Capel Lofft.*

"Where once my careless childhood stray'd,
A stranger yet to pain." GRAY.

ΕΤΩΝΗ
ΦΙΛΤΑΤΗ.

ΕΤΩΝΑ, χαιροις. Καλα Ταμησιαις
Κλινθεις' επ' οχθαις Τινδεσορης ελεπεις
Ορειβαρη νεφεσσιν Αλκην
Ευθρονον· ἡ θυγαλρεσσ' Αρηος.

Μέλαπρεπει. Τροπαι ὅλι Γαλλικῶν
Ηρει φελαγγων κλεινα, Βρέλαννικης
Ἡρωας ως ξεινισσε, λαμπρη
Τερπομενης ΕΔΟΑΡΔΟC Αυλῃ.

Σεμνονίε λεξας φυλεν ὁμηλικῶν
Σημει' εδωκε πιστ', ἱνα μνημονες
Χηραις αμυνοιν', Ορφανοισίε,
Καλλεϊ παρθενικῳ', Αρωγοι.

Δικησίε Θεσμον πασιν ὑπερβιον
Βιης φεροιεν. Σας χαρίας ὁλε
Ουπω βρόλοις εδειξεν, Ανηρ
Εξ αφανες, Χρονος αιπυμηλης.

Σιγηδ' αριστον λεπτοποδες Τοκον
Επλασσον Ὡραι. Δόξαν απειρίλον
ΕΡΡΙΚΕ, λοι·λης μειον' ειχε
Αζικορης γ'ενείωρ απ' αιης.

Ταυτης γαρ ανθει Μαρλβυριαι σκιαι
Ποιησι Νικαι. Σοιδ' επ' αενναον
Αυξεσι φεγγος ὁρμαινεσαι
Τοσσ' Ελεων γενεαι και Ανδρων.

Σοι γειονῶν εκ εσιν επιφθονος
ΕΤΩΝΑ πυργῶν Κομπος· αρειονι
Ειρηνικοι στεφεσι Κισσοι,
Μισοφιλη, σεο λεπτεον Αλσος.

Ναπαισι πλανων σαισιν αμηχωνει
Θυμος· πνεει γαρ ποικιλος Ἡδονη

Λωΐτιδες,* Λειμωνιώτιδες πυκνοι
Και Νηαρων ανα παντ' Αθυρμαι.

Ναπαισι ταυΐαις ΠΙΕΡΙΔΩΝ ποθον
Εθρεψε ΓΡΑΙΟΣ. Πινδαρικον Σθενος,
Βασιλεα, και θειον Φρονημα
Λειοπεραις χαριτεσσι μιξας.

Ου σοι μαΐην γαρ αιεν ΟΜΗΡΙΚΑΙ
Φθεγξεσι Χορδαι. Μεσα ΣΟΦΟΚΛΕΟΣ
Σεμνη. Θεοιστ' ομοιον ομφην
Κεινο στομ' ασπετον ΑΙΣΧΥΛΕΙΟΝ.

Ουδ' αυ μαΐαιως κασι ενθορε
ΔΗΜΟΣΘΕΝΟΥΣ ζρονΐημα· μελισταγης
Ου κωφον εισεπιπτεν κασ
Ηδυπαΐτε ΚΙΚΕΡΩΝΟΣ Αυδη.

Ου Μανΐοανος Κυκνος ίει Μελος
Κενας προ Αυρας. Ου Μελεΐαι Ιοσαι
ΒΕΡΝΑΡΔΕ, σειο· στωμυλοντε
Ταις χαρισιν' επιμικτον ομμα.

Ου FOSTEREIOY Σηθεος, εμπλεον
ΡΩΜΑΙΚΩΝ ΓΡΑΙΩΝΤε Μαθημαΐων
Κλεινον Νοημ' αφ ε φανεντος
ΠΟΡΣΟΝΙΚΟΝ ανέτειλεν Αστρον.

Σεθεν' αρ' ωρτο ΚΑΜΔΕΝΙΟΝ Σελας.
Σεθεν' αρ' αυτος ΓΟΧΙΟΣ· Ουνομα
Ηδιστον αλλαξατε ΜΟΥΣΑΙΣ
Σωσιπολειτε μαλιστ' ΑΘΗΝΗ.

* Nymphæ Albæ.

ΧΑΤΑΜΟC ἡμων· ϐδε συγ'ενδεης
ΕΤΩΝΑ ΔΑΦΝΩΝ. Μαρτυρες Αιεῖοι
Μινδηνιοι· Τροπαιαῖ' αὐλης
Λαμπρα Ναῳ προλιθεῦλα ΓΡΑΝΤΗC.

Μαρτυς ΙΒΗΡΩΝ και ΛΥΣΙΤΑΝΙΗC
Εγερθεις' Ελπις και Κλεος ΑΓΓΛΙΚΟΝ
Ως προσθεν εξελαμψε, ΤΑΓΟΥ.
Παρ λιπαρῃ νεον αφθεν ακλῃ.

ΓΑΛΛΩΝ Τραπευῶν. Τοι' απο ΠΑΛΛΑΔΟC
Παρεστι Δωρα· Τῶν πολεμοκλονῳ
Χρεος Θυελλη· Τῶν γεγυθεῖν
Προς σκιερῃ θεμις αὐ' ΕΛΑΙΗ.

Ου μυσικων σοι Ὑιες απειρεες,
ΕΤΩΝΑ, φθογγων. Ἁρμονιων Λυρης,
Αστρωῦε Ταξεως, Νομῶῦε
Κοσμον εν οἷς συνεχει Μαθησις.

ΕΤΩΝΑ χαιροις'—Αιεν ελευθερον
Τρεφοις φρονημα. σαις κορυφαις αει
Εφιζανοι Χαρις και Αιδως,
Και ΠΑΤΡΙΔΟC Ερος, ηδε ΒΩΜΩΝ.

Κ. Λ.

Ελωνιαῖης.

Τροστυνης εποιει.

Μαιμακτηριωνος πεντε
και δεκαῖῳ.

15 S. 1808.

Art. DCCXLIX.

N°. L. *What is light reading;—Poetry, a gift.*

I publish the following letter, as I received it. I think I can guess at the handwriting; and if my conjecture is right, I must entreat the author to throw away some part of the diffidence expressed in the latter part of the paper.

Poeta nascitur non fit.

TO THE RUMINATOR.

Mr. Ruminator,

I am one of those who prefer rambling effusions, and the natural association of ideas, to formal Essays. To you, therefore, who certainly cannot be blamed for a narrow taste, and seem to love every species of intellectual effort; who do not judge by rule, nor repeat hacknied phrases of mechanical criticism as substitutes for feeling and thought, I trust I may address a frank and unstudied letter with the certainty of a candid reception.

Allow me then to say, that among those books which are called *light reading*, it is the fashion to class many of those productions, which ought to stand in a high rank, both in point of genius and usefulness. They who have climbed up to the chair of criticism, by toil, and an unwearied attention to those departments in literature, which are attainable rather by patient drudgery than by the partial endowments of Nature, will of course use every exertion and artifice to encourage this erroneous

fashion. The ignorant great, as well as vulgar, are fond of admiring what they do not understand; and it is necessary that a work should take a scientific form, and be clothed in outward pomposity before it be deemed profound and important.

But does it never occur to these wise judges to listen to the lessons of time, and observe what are the productions which have retained within themselves the seeds of life? The works of the mere learned, for the most part, nay the larger part of the labours of science, have been pushed off the stage by their successors, as wave swallows up wave. Their materials have been pulled to pieces, and worked up afresh; and little but their name, (if even that) remains. And thus it is with artificial writers, even in the Belles Lettres. Simplicity, predominant vigour of genius, and natural eloquence, alone survive the changes of fashion, and lapse of ages.

The tricks of composition, the temporary objects of admiration in style, sentiment, or form, become as ridiculous and disgusting in one age, as they were attractive in another. From the *Euphuism* of Wm. Lilly in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, to the stiff glitter of Lord Bolingbroke in the last reign, all is gone by and forgotten. Look at old Reviews forty years back, and observe the books that they have commended, and the books that they have abused. Of the former a large part are now no longer heard of; many of the latter are among the most popular and admitted works of genius.

There is an unsophisticated force of intellect; the power of a vivid fancy, and a warm and tremulous

heart, which, when it has attained the habit of expressing itself with facility in apt and unstudied language, is certain of gaining the interest and approbation of every reader of pure taste, not at one period only, but in futurity. I would carefully preserve the letters, the undisguised thoughts, and most of the fragments of such a writer.

Half-witted censurers may call such remains, "light-reading." Do they not remember then, that

"The proper study of mankind is man?"

That there is some depth of investigation in tracing the internal movements of the human head and heart? If they, who have been highly endowed, admit us to the secret recesses of their bosoms; if they give us pictures of exalted sentiments, of ideas glowing with reflections and visions which elevate our nature, and carry us with them into scenes approaching a higher order of existence; if they warm us with their fire, and impart to us, for a time, some portion of their imagination; is this light reading, because it has not been conveyed to us in the shape of formal compositions? It is the purity and strength of the ore which a true judge regards; and not the form in which it has been manufactured; while little technical critics look to nothing but the mechanism of the workmanship.

What is the charm of Cowper? His first characteristic is the power of thinking with easy vigour; and delineating with accurate facility. His thoughts breathe of nature; and find "an echo in every bosom." Thousands recognize, as the figure starts

forth from his pen, the idea which had been dimly playing within themselves.

It is the object of no inconsiderable body of those, who have an influence on public opinion, to suppress and wipe away, if possible, the impression of native genius. It is probable that this is in great measure a remnant of the prejudices of the materialists, of whom Priestley some years back took the lead; and who infected the cant of a large body of the Dissenters, who then much more than at present possessed the command of most of the periodical vehicles of literature. How can I read the Memoirs of Chatterton, of Kirke White, of Miss Symmons,* of Miss Smith,† and many other late Lives, and not feel how much was due to nature; and how little to art and opportunity! When I read that Miss Smith, with few books and no instructors, had most of the languages ancient and modern at her command; that she could think and write with originality on the most abstruse as well as on the most poetical subjects; that she could translate with congenial spirit, even though the hand of death was upon her, in a language elegant and flowing, from the most difficult authors, is this the effect of mere ordinary human labour; or is it not rather the inspiration of superior endowments?

O thou mighty Father, who disposest thy gifts among us poor mortals, as it seemeth best to thee, how undoubtingly am I convinced by my own deficiences, that there are beings, on whom thou hast

* Daughter of Dr. Charles Symmons. *Editor.*

† Of Piercefield. *Editor.*

thought proper to bestow those pre-eminent talents, without which they never could have effected the things, for which they are so justly distinguished! In me it is not the want of toil, application, and incessant desire, even from childhood, that I cannot succeed, as they have done! But my fancy is cold, my thoughts are imperfect and confused; and I am too conscious that from the defect of nature I labour in vain! I would have been a poet, a moralist, if study and effort could have made me so. But my stars forbid!

"Sudden they mount; they beckon from the skies;
Clouds interpose, waves roar, and winds arise!"

Yours, EXSPES.

Oct. 29, 1808.

ART. DCCL.

N°. LI. *On the imperfect Morality of the Heathen compared with that of Christianity.*

"Talk they of morals?
As wise as Socrates might justly seem
The definition of a modern fool." YOUNG.

I CANNOT occupy the present paper with more important matter than the following unpublished fragments of Archbishop Secker, which formed part of a correspondence with the learned translator of Epictetus, during the progress of that elaborate work. They obviously have relation to the topics discussed in the introduction.

N°. I.*

" I must re-examine the Preface; and fear I cannot enter upon it, till after my visitation, which ends June 21.

" I approve highly of charity to the poor heathens. But is it not more charitable to think that they did not, and could not easily know so much of moral truth, as some would persuade us, than, that they knew it perfectly, and yet denied it, or disregarded it in the degree, which most of the wisest and best of them, if we are rightly informed who they were, appear to have done. But however this be, charity must be regulated by fact.

" Not only whores were allowed by law, and are forbidden by the Mosaic law, which surely is not in that article abrogated by Christianity, whatever indulgences may obtain in some nations professing it; but whoring was held to be innocent by the generality of the Greeks and Romans: so that Cicero defies any one to shew, when the contrary was held. This and more may be seen in *Potter's Greek Antiquities*, l. i. c. 12. For what purpose c. ii. is cited, I do not perceive. He doth indeed, c. xii. agree with Grotius, that only Jewish whores were forbidden, not foreign ones. But Lev. xix. 29, plainly shews, that all whoredom was accounted criminal, though this law, as well as others, might be but imperfectly executed. And foreign idolatrous whores would be still more dangerous than

* Both these papers are transcribed from the original MSS. in the Archbishop's own hand; which have been furnished by an intimate friend to whom I am under continual obligation. *Editor.*

Israelitish ones. As to the heathens though severer things may be said by them of whores, I doubt, and I venture to say no more, whether any prohibition of whoredom is to be found in any of them, before this gentle, rather counsel than precept, of Epictetus. Nor do I see why it is not fair to quote both the Old and new Testament, as giving better directions concerning this point: or why we are to suppose, that perhaps good and wise heathens might be highly offended at the common practice, when there is nothing to render the supposition probable. For that reason proves it to be unjustifiable, is no support of the supposition: unless we must suppose further, that the heathens knew every thing which reason can teach. Indeed if some heathens did condemn it, yet if the prevailing doctrine were in its favour, the heathen morality must be estimated by the notions received amongst their moralists: there being no standard, as amongst Christians, of superior authority. Their morality ought not indeed to be depreciated, that is, unjustly. But neither ought it to be unjustly extolled as it hath been: and particularly with a view of inferring that Christianity was not wanted for the regulation of manners. I would grant even to these gentlemen every thing, which they can demand with truth: but I would grant them no more, though Christianity would have ever so many distinguishing advantages left. I would insist on all that God hath given it: and not adventure to say, what in some sense might be said, that fewer are enough. Now that the moral notions of the principal heathen nations and philosophers in general were wrong and defective

in several capital points is notorious. That of the exposition of children is a shocking instance. Another of lending wives you may see in *Potter*. Plato's doctrine on these two points is monstrous beyond belief. And sodomy was deemed by him, and many others, but a venial offence at worst. One might go on further: but there is no need. I only add, that why it should scarce ever be of use to state their mistakes, in order to shew the happiness of being better taught, I cannot imagine."

N°. II.

"The reason given Lev. xix. 29, holds against the allowance of any prostitutes; making whoredom wickedness, or the cause of wickedness: and greater mischief was likely to proceed from foreign than domestic prostitutes. The Grecian laws were, I presume, to preserve the honour of their families. They express a further view. Exod xxii. 17, directs, that if a man lie with a single woman, (it is not limited to a jewish woman) he shall marry her; or by way of penalty give her a portion if her father forbids the marriage. Deut. xxi. 10, &c. supposes even according to our translation, no other way of a man's gratifying his desire towards a female captive than by marrying her: that is, I conceive, as a wife or concubine, which was an inferior sort of wife. After a month, and not before, he might go in unto her, and, which is closely connected with it, be her husband. But probably v. 11 should be rendered, *and hast a desire unto her, then thou shalt take her to thy wife.* The next verse directs the

method of proceeding for this purpose; *and thou shalt bring her home*, &c. I know the Rabbins put a very different, and I think absurd, interpretation upon this passage. The penalty of a trespass offering appointed Lev. xix. 20, for lying with a bond maid betrothed to another man, was no amends to that other man, but an acknowledgment to God for the sin, for which amends could not be made to her by marriage, because she was betrothed to another. But indeed the word here translated *betrothed* signifies nothing like it elsewhere: the word translated *bondmaid* is elsewhere commonly translated *handmaid*; and doth not imply a foreigner: the word translated *scourged* signifies elsewhere only *an examination*, which may indeed be made by scourging. And the Samaritan copy applies this inquiry or scourging to the man, and goes on, *he*, not they, *shall be put to death*, the offence against a servant maid not being so great. And thus the law will determine nothing about her; but leave her to be corrected by her master. Upon the whole I think this text will be of little use in the present question. Deut. xxiii. 2, forbids a bastard to enter into the congregation of the Lord, i. e. to be deemed a citizen of Israel and capable of public offices. 1 Cor. x. 8, mentions fornication as a crime in the Jews, and doth not mean spiritual fornication, i. e. idolatry, for the preceding verse speaks of that; and the fornication, to which it refers was with foreign women. Philo the Jew, who lived in Christ's time, saith in his life of Joseph, that it was peculiar to the Jews, that they were forbidden all whoredom by their law. It was reckoned a ground of shame

and contempt before the law; Gen. xxxviii. 23. Job xxxi. 9—11 saith, *if mine heart hath been deceived by a woman*, (he doth not confine it to a married woman) *this is a heinous crime*, &c. Nay, verse 1, he goes further still. And certainly the Proverbs and the prophets condemn whoredom in men very strongly. And there is no intimation in scripture, that it was permitted the Jews for the hardness of their hearts. It appears indeed from 1 Kings, iii. 16, that they did sometimes tolerate it, as they did many other bad things.

"Now compare with these particulars the praises given Solon for allowing full liberty to whores at Athens; the praises given by Cato to a young fellow coming out of a *bawdy* house; the well-known passage of Terence in favour of whoring; the challenge of Cicero to name any time, when men were blamed for it, or not countenanced in it, &c. &c. &c. Pythagoras's verses were not written by him, nor is it known when: besides that his precept, as you observe, is too general to determine any thing. Learned men have observed long ago, that Phocylides is interpolated both from the old and New Testament, probably after the days of the early Christian writers: for they do not produce these places from him. And therefore his two words, *preserve virginity*, will be of no use neither. But, which is very remarkable, several philosophers after Christ, Mausonius, Dion called the Golden-mouthed, and Porphyry, speak warmly against fornication.

"I may as well add here, what will perhaps be of use to you in another place, as I know not whe-

ther you observed it in reading Brucker [*I now see you did*] that he extends the life of Epictetus to Adrian's time, who reigned from A. D. 117, to 138. He would therefore have time, and his situation both in Rome and Greece would give him opportunity, not only to converse with many Christians, but to see the books of the new Testament, and other writings of theirs. Some think he lived to the reign of the Antonines: but Fabricius hath shewn, that probably they mistake."

Art. DCCLI.

N° LII. *Fugitive Poetry.*

" There stern religion quench'd th' unwilling flame;
There died the best of passions, love and fame."

POPE.

TO THE RUMINATOR.

SIR,

I REQUEST the favour of you to give place to the following fugitive pieces, of which MS. copies have been found among a literary relation's Papers. I cannot positively assert that they have not been in print before.

I. *On Bayham Abbey.**

Be hush'd, ye Fair! Yon monitor survey,
That awful living legend of the day;
Tread soft, nor rudely press the hallow'd ground,
Where all is sacred mystery around;
Where nodding reason must perforce awake,
When passion sleeps while mouldering ruins speak;

* In Sussex, now the seat of Marquis Camden.

Where silence can some useful lesson teach,
And pour forth all the energy of speech.
Think underneath you tread some friend ador'd,
Whose jocund soul once bless'd the social board;
Now play'd the hero's, now the lover's part,
Now for his country bled, now stole a heart;
He's gone, cold death inexorably just
Strikes the dread blow; frail man returns to dust.
Methinks I hear some furrow'd monk relate
What frenzy urg'd to Bayham's still retreat;
With vain regret in pensive mood declare,
"I fought at Agincourt, my trade was war;
The path to fame with eager zeal pursu'd,
But sunk a victim to ingratitude;
Then quitting honour and ambition's road,
Sought an asylum in the house of God."
Another Monk, by tottering age oppress,
With fault'ring tongue disburthens thus his breast;
"I figur'd once a beau, and flatter'd too
Each credulous fair, as you and others do;
To all alike vow'd constancy, and strove
To fix each heart, unpractis'd yet in love,
Till genuine ardour warm'd my breast at last,
And disappointment paid me for the past;
Thus robb'd of all that passion reckons dear,
Compunction touch'd my soul and fix'd me here;
The curtain drops, my vain pursuits are o'er,
And life's gay prospect now enchants no more."
Yon Friar, perhaps the idol of an hour,
Once rul'd supreme in dignity and power;
A minister of state, what state is worse?
The prince's favourite, but the nation's curse,
The people's tyrant, but ambition's slave,
Now doom'd to damn the state, and now to save;

Till tir'd by faction's persecuting host,
By friends betray'd who once had flatter'd most,
He seeks like wearied travellers an home,
And adds one saint to Bayham's sacred dome.
To this grave moral then, ye Fair! attend,
Life and its pleasures soon must have an end;
One general summons hence we all obey,
One fate absorbs this tenement of clay;
Man in his strength and beauty in its prime
Float but as bubbles on the expanse of time;
An airy sound that nought of substance wears,
A vision that enchants, then disappears!
Clad all in regal pomp, e'en princes must
Mix, undistinguish'd, with the peasant's dust;
Heroes together with the coward lye,
And beauty mingle with deformity:
Man struts awhile, by pageant folly drest,
A monarch, soldier, politician, priest;
Each acts his part, and when the scene is o'er,
Must tread that path which others trod before;
To tyrant death e'en youth and beauty bow;
And Milner be what Queensbury is now.

II. *To the Right Honourable the Lady Viscountess Limerick, upon her leaving England in the year* 1745. *An Ode. Sent after her into Ireland. By Mr. Wright, the Astronomer.*

I.

A general good was ne'er confin'd
To time, or place, by heaven design'd
To bless the human race:
The sun thus rolling round the year,
And climates varying ev'ry where,
Exemplify the case.

II.

No season fix'd was ever found,
Except on Eden's happy ground,
Where nature try'd her laws;
But she'd no sooner learn'd to change,
Than storks and swallows long'd to range,
And follow'd with applause.

III.

Thus you, who write, and talk with ease;
Possess'd of ev'ry power to please,
With science at command;
Forsake your friends, and native home,
And, destin'd far from us to roam,
Now bless a foreign land.

IV.

The sun so sinks below the west,
When mortals have retired to rest,
And leaves the welkin pale;
Whilst fainting clouds his absence mourn,
Despairing of his wish'd return,
And conscious shades prevail.

V.

So you, compell'd by partial fate,
Submissive in that happy state,
Which all your wishes crown,
Though sad, recede, in calm content,
And leave your friends to late lament,
A loss! they find too soon.

VI.

But expectation's yet alive,
And chearful hopes shall long survive,
That we may meet again;
Where future joys may still be our's,
Till when, all present ones be your's:
O Fortune, say *amen*.

"III. *Hymn by Dr. Hawksworth.*

" Attune the song to mournful strains,
Of wrongs and woes the song complains,
An orphan's voice essays to swell
The notes, that tears by turns repel.

Left on the world's bleak waste forlorn,
In sin conceiv'd, to sorrow born;
By guilt and shame foredoom'd to share
No mother's love, no father's care;

Alone, amidst surrounding strife,
And naked to the storms of life,
Despair looks round with aching eyes,
And sinking nature groans and dies.

But who is he who deigns to claim
From all the wrong'd a father's name?
To rapture tune the changing strains,
'Tis God whose hand the world sustains.

He smiling bends from Mercy's throne,
And calls the fatherless his own;
To stranger hands he gives the trust;
We feel that stranger hands are just.

They to the poor his gifts dispense,
And guard the weak with his defence:
Oh Father, let us still be thine,
And claim thine heritage divine;
Still blest while gratitude repays
Thy endless love with endless praise."

" IV. *The Arcadia of Poussin.*

" See how the skilful hand of fam'd Poussin
Copies from nature the fair past'ral scene!
Arcadia's self behold!—her waving woods,
Her flow'ry meads, and silver shining floods:
Each rural beauty rises to the sight,
And the whole landscape smiles serene delight.
A while it pleases,—but the painter knew,
To please us long he must affect us too:
With lively animated strokes of art,
Must touch the tender sympathizing heart.
For this, he in the midst a tomb design'd,
On which the statue of a maid reclin'd,
With graceful attitude informs the eye,
Here, (early fall'n to earth,) youth, beauty lye.
A short inscription tells her hapless fate,
' Happy I liv'd and all life's sweets enjoy'd,
I in Arcadia liv'd, and yet I dy'd!'
Near, see two blooming nymphs and two young swains,
Who seem as if (while roving o'er the plains
In search of pleasure, innocent delight)
Chance had just struck them with the mournful sight:
See one the pointing finger wond'ring raise
To fix the rest, in more attentive gaze.
On each chang'd face you hardly can descry
The parting farewell of expiring joy.
While you regard, the sight deceives the ear,
And morals sage from rosy lips you hear;
'Tis thus imagination makes them say,
' All must th' inexorable law obey;
Death spares not sex, nor youth, nor beauty's bloom,
No clime is an asylum from the tomb."

Art. DCCLII.

N°. LIII. *Few Books animated by Genius: the great delight afforded by such as possess it.*

" Emptis quod libris tibi bibliotheca referta est,
Doctum et grammaticum te, Philomuse, putas?"
MART.

Among the innumerable volumes, with which the shelves of libraries groan, how few are animated with any striking portion of that living spirit, which is infused by genius. Of the best of them, the major part are heavy and dead masses of learning. Dr. Johnson, speaking of Dr. Birch the biographer, remarked, " Tom Birch is as brisk as a bee in conversation, but no sooner does he take a pen in his hand, than it becomes a torpedo to him, and benumbs all his faculties."* Minds must be more than ordinarily endowed, to give vitality to ideas and language without any aid from external objects. A lively and breathing picture of the visions of the brain can only be produced by the fervour of genius.

Books are in general little more than transcripts of those which went before them, with a little difference of arrangement and combination: the same ingredients only poured into new vessels. Memory is the principal faculty which has been exercised in making them. When thoughts or images are brought forward, which have *originated* in the mind of the author, they will exhibit a freshness and vigour,

* Boswell, I. 138.

that, even though they may be similar to such as have been produced by others, will make them interesting and valuable. There is all the difference, which there is between an original, and a copy in painting. There may be the same outlines, the same figures and colours; but the difference can be better felt than expressed; one is faint, and cold and dead; the other breathes and moves.

It is idle to be quibbling about the definition of literary genius, and limiting it to one or two forms of excellence; every thing is genius, which is inspired by this living spirit. Nor is it confined alone to poetry, though in poetry its higher powers may be exhibited: still less is it narrowed to one or two tracts of poetry: though Dr. Darwin seemed strangely to think almost all the merit of that art was restrained to the representation of material objects. Elevated thoughts, and tender sentiments, when conveyed in congenial language, partake surely as much of the essence of this divine power, as the most brilliant imagery!

I desire no more infallible test of genius, than that ardent manner, which, displaying the soul of the writer predominant over his language, communicates its own fire to the reader, and carries him along with it. He, who is characterised by this trait, gives an interest to every subject that he touches, and throws sparks of light on the dullest subject.

I have been in the habit of contemplating beings so gifted, with a peculiar degree of veneration, beyond perhaps what the sternness of a cold philosophy will allow. Their powers seem to be out of all

proportion to their learning, acquirements, and opportunities; or rather appear to have no kind of concurrence with them. They are actuated by something beyond themselves; and are in some respects like the Æolian harps, on which the airs of heaven play involuntary music. I continually think of the happy, though somewhat severe words, in which some one (Lord Orford, I think,) spoke of Goldsmith. He called him "an inspired ideot!"

Men of this cast have an acuteness of sensibility which is dangerous to their peace, and too frequently troublesome to others. A due regulation of it can alone conduct them to old age; and to the performance of those greater undertakings by which a high and permanent fame is secured. Burns, and many more, have fallen sacrifices in early life. Some on the contrary have touched it with too violent a hand, and have extinguished their genius with it.

These richly endowed mortals too frequently pay dear enough for their superiority. Ordinary minds make no allowance for their eccentricities; but pursue them with unrelenting ridicule and hatred. Unsusceptible of the charms of their eloquence, they perceive only the impetuosity of their passions, and the inequality of their judgments. They see them inferior and neglectful in the trifles, in which alone they are themselves conversant; and think of them by the puny standard of their own pleasures and pursuits: while if a glimpse of the pre-eminence to which they are entitled breaks in upon their dark intellects, envy rises at the same instant, and makes them worse foes than mere dulness.

I am not sure that I would wish my child to be a genius. Its advantages and its evils are so intermixed, that it is a fearful gift, for which I should not have the boldness to pray. But I cannot withhold my worship from it, wherever it inhabits.

If I am asked, why, with so keen a sense of discrimination of the heavenly flame, I have in the CENSURA LITERARIA endeavoured to revive so many old volumes, which never possessed a spark of it, I answer, that it is for other subordinate claims to notice, which the course of time has given them beyond their original value, that I bring them forward; and that I call attention to them, as illustrations of the progress of language and manners.

It would be easy to specify numerous works of obsolete rhymers, possessed of a considerable portion of minor ingenuity, which secured them a transient fame, and renders them still curious to the philologer and the antiquary, yet so deficient in a true poetical spirit, that not a single passage of that high class can be found in them. Some one of the leading powers sets the fashion of the day; and a hundred imitators start up with productions similar to the original in shape and make, and every thing but the soul that animates it! Dull readers at first are deceived by the outward likeness; but time, the surest touchstone, proves which is buoyant, and which is doomed only to sink.

A book of genius is a mirror which reflects back the rich scenery of an higher intellect, adorned with all the imagery of a visionary world. It affords one of the most acute, and surely one of the purest pleasures, of which our nature, when refined and

improved by education, is capable. But alas! it is almost as rare as it is delightful.

Nov. 23, 1808.

Art. DCCLIII.

N°. LIV. *The difficulty of a genuine transcript of the operations of the mind greater than those, who have not made the attempt, suppose.*

"It is always pleasing to observe, how much more our minds can conceive, than our bodies can perform."

JOHNSON.

The following communication is very opportune, as it has a very close connection with the subject of the foregoing paper.

Nov. 24, 1808.

Mr. Ruminator,

There is a certain degree of self-approbation, which is really necessary for one's peace of mind. You perhaps may be able to afford it me, by putting me in a little better humour with my own talents. It has been my ambition to be an author, I mean of original compositions; but, though nothing seems easier before I sit down to write, I no sooner take my pen in my hand, than my powers fail me. I seem beforehand to have a store of ideas; and I flatter myself that an easy flow of language is at my command.

I cannot tell whether it is the mechanical operation of writing, that puts to flight the train of my thoughts; or whether I deceive myself as to the

existence of an intellectual fund, which will not bear the test of an attempt to realize it.

He, who possesses the talent of committing to paper a series of reflections or sentiments, in a manner which will interest an impartial reader, and abide the censure of candid criticism, can perform no more, than, if we were to judge from the pretensions thrown out in common conversation, almost every educated person of ordinary abilities can easily execute. I confess my own opinion is very much the reverse: and, in truth, I should be necessitated to deem myself miserably below the usual standard of mental faculties, if I thought otherwise.

I am inclined to believe, that in the oral communication of our own ideas so much depends on voice and manner, while, from their transitoriness, so much less time is given for a strict examination, that there is little opportunity for appreciating them severely and justly. These praters therefore do not know what it is to bring the operations of their minds to the nicer scrutiny, which written thoughts afford.

For my own part, I own, with a due sense of mortification, that my shadowy conceptions are perpetually eluding my grasp at the instant of embrace. I know not, whether I am more venturous then some others, and follow delusive lights. The generality of authors, I observe, cannot hazard a step out of the beaten track. They follow their leaders with a timid servility; and repeat their songs almost like mocking-birds.

There is something convenient in the use of a thought, that has been already tried, and moulded

into shape, and properly dressed and ornamented: no perils are encountered: all is safe, and all is easy. As we have had little cost in the education of such a mistress, we can spare something for a trifling addition of ornament!

It is much the same to the generality of readers: it looks as well to the eye, and sounds as well to the ear. They cannot judge between the original, and that which is borrowed.

But Mr. Ruminator, if I fail in catching these nymphs of my own fancy, "these fairy creatures of the brain," which shine by their own light, my time is too much occupied, and my taste is rendered too keen to put up with these hacknied strumpets, which display themselves in borrowed feathers in the travelled roads.

These aërial ladies, that thus fly from my pursuit, what are they?

——"gay creatures of the element,
That play i' th' plighted clouds!"

Poets can catch them at their will; can bid them sit for their pictures; and then can delineate with facility all their beauties. I, alas! follow, non passibus æquis; "clouds interpose;" and the flattering vision vanishes in an instant in darkness.

You can tell me, for sometimes at least you must have experienced these disappointments, what remedy, or what consolation there is for these failures! Am I in truth more deficient than falls to the common lot; or do the generality of educated people delude themselves with the possession of powers in

which on trial they would find themselves as wanting as I have experienced myself to be?

When I look back on Addison, and Steele, and Johnson, and Hawksworth, and recollect how very few have been able to follow in the same course with any tolerable success, I am induced to hope, that the difficulty is greater than this mob of talkers and readers have been willing to suppose.

Such a combination of endowments and opportunities seems so requisite to produce eminence in the higher orders of composition, that I trust a failure may be incurred without disgrace, while the value of a happy performance ought to be enhanced. Of those, on whom nature has bestowed gifts sufficiently rich, how many are there, whose exertions are palsied by indolence, adversity, morbid nerves, or other unpropitious circumstances!

Sometimes I persuade myself to think, that my inability arises from my anxiety; and that, were I more confident, I should be more likely to succeed. Dr. Johnson used to say, "that with the necessity comes the ability." I have not found it so.

As you have said, that you love to investigate the internal movements of the human mind, I trust, you will not deem this picture of the struggles of mine unacceptable.

Your's,

PHUGAPHILUS.

Art. DCCLIV.

N°. LV. *On the Beneficence of Providence in bestowing a Sensibility to the Charms of Nature; and on the permanent Power of delighting possessed by Poetry, which describes them.*

"God made the country; but man made the town."
COWPER.

It is probably for the most beneficent purposes that we are endued with a keen sensibility for the charms of Nature. Even now, when winter howls round us, and a damp and black gloom hovers over the lawn, and the brown leafless woods that skirt it, I look abroad from my retirement, and feel my anxieties gilded by a solemn kind of pleasure. Addison has a paper on this subject written with all that philosophical truth, that beauty of imagery, moral pathos, nice discrimination, and felicity of language, which render his Essays inimitable.

From the very earliest period of my life, almost every thing which has been of sufficient interest to make a lasting impression on my memory, has intermixed itself with some look of the sky, or the fields, or the woods; or some other image of Nature. I remember, though I have not power to describe, a hundred aspects of the sun and the moon over the scenes of my nativity, as connected with some childish exploit, from the age of six, nay of four, years. And surely, as sensations of this kind are among the most pure and virtuous of our existence, we may be allowed to look back upon them with satisfaction and delight!

The remark may be sufficiently obvious, but I cannot help here expressing it, that this habit of associating all his feelings and every event which he describes with natural scenery, is among the principal charms of the poetry of Burns. It almost always makes the opening of his love-songs; and generally even of his songs of war. For this we need look no further than the index, containing the first lines of his songs, in the fourth volume of Currie's edition of his works. And I will only specify two or three, which immediately cross my eye.

"The Catrine woods were yellow seen,
The flowers decay'd on Catrine lee;
Nor lavrock sung on hillock green,
But Nature sicken'd on the e'e.
Thro' faded groves Maria sang,
Hersel in beauty's bloom the while;
And aye the wildwood echoes rang,
Fareweel the braes o' Ballockmyle."

"Flow gently, sweet Afton, among thy green braes,
Flow gently; I'll sing thee a song in thy praise;
My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream;
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not my dream." &c.

"Behold the hour, the boat arrive;
Thou goest, the darling of my heart:
Sever'd from thee, can I survive?
But fate has will'd, and we must part.
I'll often greet this surging swell;
Yon distant isle will often hail:
'E'en here I took the last farewell;
There latest mark'd her vanish'd sail!" &c.

"*Evan Banks.*

"Slow spreads the gloom my soul desires,
The sun from India's shore retires:
To Evan banks with temp'rate ray,
Home of my youth, he leads the day.
O banks, to me for ever dear!
O streams, whose murmurs still I hear!
All, all my hopes of bliss reside,
Where Evan mingles with the tide!"* &c.

It appears to me that Burns never made an assignation of pleasure or friendship, without feeling that the tints of the sky, and the natural scenery around him, were prominent ingredients in his enjoyment. This is one striking feature among the many exquisite charms of *Gray's Elegy*. All the characteristics, every leading event of the rustic's life, which are delineated with such admirable feeling, and such vigorous and living touches, are connected with, and marked out by some image of surrounding nature. Thus "the breezy call of incense-breathing morn," (one of the finest lines in the whole body of English, or any, poetry) "the twittering swallow;" the "woods bowing to the axe," &c. &c. (all of which are too familiar to every reader to be here particularized), so soften and smooth the melancholy created by the affecting ideas of mortality and earthly oblivion, as to make us in love with a peaceful obscurity, and hang with benevolent and tender hearts over the "short and simple annals of the poor."

* This last is from Mr. Cromek's new volume of "Reliques of Burns's," just published, by Cadell and Davies. 8vo. But it turns out to have been written by Helen Williams.

This was also the vital charm of the poetry of Cowper, who says, speaking of the country,

> " I never fram'd a wish, or form'd a plan,
> That flatter'd me with hopes of earthly bliss,
> But here I laid the scene!"

But it has been doubted, and justly doubted, whether descriptions of this kind will long interest without much intermixture of sentiment and moral remark. Man must form an important part of the picture; and to develope its operations on him will always give it its highest interest.

I will venture to say, that no ambitious verbal delineation, no unchaste and gorgeous heaping together of imagery, no laboured combination of objects, will gain the approbation of judges, or the sympathy of those, who have a genuine taste. They, whose writings are dictated by artifice and imitation, want those infallible directors in selecting and combining their materials, which are to be found in the voluntary impulses of the head and the heart endowed with genius. These mocking birds of poetry catch perhaps distinct parts of the songs of their masters with tolerable exactness; but being insensible of the flow of soul, by which they have been produced, they jumble them together in an association so unnatural, as to retain no part of the charms which the originals possessed. We see similar defects every day exhibited in pictures; we see glaring colours, distorted invention, and incredible toil: but all is vain; and whatever the mob may pronounce, the eye of skill turns away from them unaffected, except with disgust. In the

mean time the real painter combines without effort; embodies the unsought visions of his fancy; and meets delight in every cultivated spectator; and a mirror in every well-formed bosom.

The test which I have now, and often before, mentioned, I believe to be infallible, if applied to the merits either of poetry or painting. It will shew where lies the radical defect of the multitudes of second-rate rhymers, who follow at the heels of the few poets of every age. It will account for the similitude of the outward forms of their productions; and the marked dissimilitude of the souls which animate them. In the first a secret power carries us along with them in every line; in the others it is *vox et præterea nihil.*

Let us instance in a poetess lately dead. Where lies the charm of those little poems of Mrs. Smith, which she has entitled SONNETS? Is it in description? We shall find many among her cotemporaries, whose descriptions are more abundant, more uncommon, and more splendid than her's! But are they equally natural? Do they seem equally to breathe the freshness and vigour of original feeling? And is the association such as equally to command the sympathy of the reader?—Is it in sentiment? Perhaps few among her rivals exhibit sentiments less recondite, or even less free from some appearance of triteness. But have they the effect of triteness in her? No: because they evidently spring from the fulness of a pure, a pathetic, and an overflowing heart.

The well-spring of natural eloquence was never yet tedious or insipid. The unsophisticated ideas,

whose vividness shines through the language in which they are clothed, possess a permanent attraction; and though they are such as have appeared to the world a thousand times before, still continue to delight. Stupid critics analyse, and the charm is gone; they separate the parts and find nothing in them. We may say with Burns,

> These "pleasures are like poppies spread;
> You seize the flower, its bloom is shed;
> Or like the snow-falls in the river,
> A moment white, then melts for ever;
> Or like the borealis race,
> That flit ere you can point their place;
> Or like the rainbow's lovely form,
> Evanishing amid the storm." *

But the charm will be renewed; and real poetry will always delight, as it re-appears, in spite of critics and analysers; while all the rules of writing, and all the praise of the mechanical judges, will not preserve a production where the soul of poetry is wanting. A simple, touching, and vivid description of the scenery of nature, is an ingredient which has never been known to fail in giving permanent interest to a composition.

Dec. 15, 1808.

* Tam O'Shanter.

Art. DCCLV.

N°. LVI. *On the Allegorical Style of Poetry of Collins;—with a Comparison of it with that of Sackville.*

" Melior fieri tuendo."

I doubt whether there are any poems in our language more elegant and highly finished than those of Collins. There scarcely occurs an imperfect line, a lame sentence, or a flat and improper word. They are perhaps more marked by the singular praise of being such as none but himself could have produced than the compositions of any other author. On the other hand they are, I think, deficient in some ingredients, which constitute the very first charms of poetry. Let me be forgiven, if with a love of this great poet above that of most men, I endeavour with candour to point these out; while I trust I shall shew myself fully sensible of his inimitable beauties.

His Odes are principally descriptive of single allegorical figures. We know that in painting no subjects are more generally tiresome than these. Whether it requires too great a habit of abstraction, or whether the condensing into one person all the varieties of a passion, too much narrows our ideas, or whatever be the cause, it is certain that even of those who are pleased with such exhibitions at first, the major part soon grow weary. Collins's delineations partake of this defect; and partake of them the more, because he has chosen to delineate them too much in the manner of a painter. He has not sufficiently enriched his figures with sentiment; and with that expression of the movements of the soul,

which the pencil of the painter, and he who is merely conversant with matter, can never reach. I do not mean that he has not gone beyond the painter; because a painter cannot exhibit the successive movements of a figure, nor place it in a variety of situations and circumstances in the same picture, nor express any of those invocations, which the dulness of the spectator will seldom be able to supply to the lips of the person worshipping the goddess which may form the main feature on the canvass.

But why should the poet so much curtail, if he do not entirely forego, his superiorities? Why should he leave those paths, whither the painter cannot follow him, for others, in which the painter in some important points has even the advantage. The finest Ode of Collins, next to that to the Passions, is the Ode to Fear; it contains the strongest expression of the internal workings of the spirit of the personified Being addressed: but perhaps even this sublime composition is in some degree liable to these objections. The animated and inimitable groups of the PASSIONS themselves disclose their characteristic impulses by action only.

There is I think another trait in the allegorical personages of Collins. They are almost too abstract; too far removed from human creatures; instead of earthly beings somewhat elevated and purified. I can more easily illustrate this by instances, than by definition. When Gray personifies ADVERSITY, he manages his invention in such a manner, as to give it a more moral effect, and bring it more "home to men's business and bosoms," while his composition loses nothing of the poetical character.

But there is a poet, who appears to me to have given this moral cast to descriptions of this kind beyond all others. The vigour and solemnity of his personifications, and the powers of his language are entitled to the highest praise, without reference to the age in which he wrote, while the fact of their having appeared two hundred and sixty years ago must excite not only admiration but astonishment. I refer to the INDUCTION of Thomas Sackville, the first Earl of Dorset, in the *Mirror for Magistrates*.

The poet is conducted by SORROW to the classical hell, the place of torments and the place of happiness, where he describes the dreadful group of beings whom he found sitting within the porch.

———" She forthwith uplifting me apace
Remov'd my dread, and with a stedfast mind
Bade me come on, for here was now the place,
The place where we our travel end should find;
Wherewith I arose, and to the place assign'd
Astoin'd I stalk, when strait we approached near
The dreadful place, that you will dread to hear.

An hideous hole all vast, withouten shape,
Of endless depth o'erwhelm'd with ragged stone,
With ugly mouth, and grisly jaws doth gape,
And to our sight confounds itself in one.
Here entred we, and yeding forth, anon
An horrible loathly lake we might discern,
As black as pitch, that cleped is Averne.

A deadly gulf, where nought but rubbish grows,
With foul black swelth, in thicken'd lumps that lies,
Which up in th' air such stinking vapours throws,
That over there may fly no fowl but dies,
Choak'd with the pestilent vapours that arise.

Hither we come, whence forth we still did pace,
In dreadful fear amid the dreadful place.

And first within the porch and jaws of hell
Sat deep REMORSE OF CONSCIENCE, all besprent
With tears; and to herself oft would she tell
Her wretchedness; and cursing never stent
To sob and sigh; but ever thus lament
With thoughtful care, as she that all in vain
Would wear and waste continually in pain.

Her eyes unstedfast rolling here and there,
Whirl'd on each place, as place that vengeance brought,
So was her mind continually in fear,
Toss'd and tormented with the tedious thought
Of those detested crimes which she had wrought;
With dreadful chear, and looks thrown to the sky,
Wishing for death, and yet she could not die.

Next saw we DREAD, all trembling how he shook
With foot uncertain proffer'd here and there:
Benumb'd of speech, and with a ghastly look
Search'd every place, all pale and dread for fear,
His cap borne up with staring of his hair,
Stunn'd and amaz'd at his own shade for dread,
And fearing greater dangers than was need.

And next within the entry of this lake
Sat fell REVENGE, gnashing her teeth for ire,
Devising means how she may vengeance take,
Never in rest till she have her desire;
But frets within so far forth with the fire
Of wreaking flames, that now determines she
To die by death, or veng'd by death to be.

When fell REVENGE, with bloody foul pretence
Had shew'd herself as next in order set,
With trembling limbs we softly parted thence,

Till in our eyes another sight we met;
When fro my heart a sigh forthwith I set,
Ruing alas upon the woeful plight
Of MISERY, that next appear'd in sight.

His face was lean, and some-deal pin'd away,
And eke his hands consumed to the bone;
But what his body was I cannot say,
For on his carcase raiment had he none,
Save clouts and patches pieced one by one;
With staff in hand, and scrip on shoulders cast,
His chief defence against the winter's blast.

His food, for most, was wild fruits of the tree,
Unless sometime some crums fell to his share,
Which in his wallet long, God wot, kept he;
As on the which full daintily he would fare:
His drink the running stream; his cup the bare
Of his palm clos'd, his bed the hard cold ground.
To this poor life was MISERY ybound.

Whose wretched state when we had well beheld,
With tender ruth on him and on his fears,
In thoughtful cares forth then our pace we held;
And by and by another shape appears
Of greedy CARE, still brushing by the breers;
His knuckles knob'd, his flesh deep dented in,
With tawed hands, and hard ytanned skin.

The morrow gray no sooner hath begun
To spread his light e'en peeping in our eyes,
When he is up, and to his work yrun;
But let the night's black misty mantle rise,
And with foul dark never so much disguise
The fair bright day, yet ceaseth he no while;
But hath his candles to prolong his toil.

By him lay heavy SLEEP, the cousin of Death,
Flat on the ground, and still as any stone,
A very corpse, save yielding forth a breath;
Small keep took he, whom Fortune frowned on;
Or whom she lifted up unto the throne
Of high renown; but as a living death,
So dead alive, of life he drew the breath.

The body's rest, the quiet of the heart,
The travel's ease, the still night's seer was he;
And of our life in earth the better part,
Rever of sight, and yet in whom we see
Things oft that tide, and oft that never be;
Without respect esteeming equally
King Crœsus' pomp, and Irus' poverty.

And next in order sad OLD AGE we found:
His beard all hoar, his eyes hollow and blind,
With drooping chear still poring on the ground,
As on the place where Nature him assign'd
To rest, when that the sisters had untwin'd
His vital thread, and ended with their knife
The fleting course of fast declining life.

There heard we him with broken and hollow plaint
Rue with himself his end approaching fast,
And all for nought his wretched mind torment
With sweet remembrance of his pleasures past,
And fresh delights of lusty youth forewaste;
Recounting which, how would he sob and shriek,
And to be young again of Jove beseek.

But, an' the cruel fates so fixed be
That time forepast cannot return again,
This one request of Jove yet prayed he,
That in such wither'd plight and wretched pain
As eld, (accompanied with his loathsome train)

Had brought on him, all were it woe and grief,
He might awhile yet linger forth his life;

And not so soon descend into the pit,
Where Death, when he the mortal corpse hath slain,
With reckless hand in grave doth cover it,
Thereafter never to enjoy again
The gladsome light, but in the ground ylain,
In depth of darkness waste and wear to nought,
As he had never into the world been brought.

But who had seen him sobbing, how he stood
Unto himself, and how he would bemoan
His youth forepast, as though it wrought him good
To talk of youth, all were his youth foregone,
He would have mus'd, and marvell'd much whereon
This wretched age should life desire to feign,
And knows full well life doth but length his pain.

Crook'd back'd he was, tooth-shaken, and blear eyed,
Went on three feet and sometimes crept on four,
With old lame bones, that rattled by his side,
His scalp all pil'd, and he with eld forlore:
His wither'd fist still knocking at death's door,
Fumbling and driveling as he draws his breath,
For brief, the shape and messenger of Death.

And fast by him pale MALADY was plac'd,
Sore sick in bed, her colour all foregone,
Bereft of stomach, savour, and of taste;
Ne could she brook no meat but broths alone.
Her breath corrupt, her keepers, every one,
Abhorring her; her sickness past recure;
Detesting phisick, and all phisick's cure.

But O the doleful sight that then we see;
We turn'd our sight, and on the other side
A grisly shape of FAMINE mought we see,

With greedy looks, and gaping mouth that cried,
And roar'd for meat as she should there have died;
Her body thin and bare as any bone,
Whereto was left nought but the case alone.

And that, alas, was knawn on every where,
All full of holes, that I ne mought refrain
From tears, to see how she her arms could tear,
And with her teeth gnash on the bones in vain;
When all for nought she fain would so sustain
Her starven corpse, that rather seem'd a shade,
Than any substance of a creature made.

Great was her force, whom stone wall could not stay;
Her tearing nails snatching at all she saw;
With gaping jaws that by no means ymay
Be satisfied from hunger of her maw;
But eats herself as she that hath no law;
Gnawing, alas, her carcase all in vain,
Where you may count each sinew, bone and vein.

On her while we thus firmly fix'd our eyes,
That bled for ruth of such a dreary sight,
Lo, suddenly she shright in so huge wise,
As made hell gates to shiver with the might,*
Wherewith a dart we saw how it did light
Right on her breast, and therewithal pale DEATH
Enthrilling it to reve her of her breath.

And by and by a dumb dead corpse we saw,
Heavy and cold, the shape of death aright,
That daunts all earthly creatures to his law;
Against whose force in vain it is to fight,
Ne peers, ne princes, nor no mortal wight;
Ne town, ne realms, cities, ne strongest tower,
But all perforce must yeild unto his power.

* What an admirable and highly poetical line!

His dart anon out of the corpse he took,
And in his hand (a dreadful sight to see)
With great triumph eftsoons the same he shook,
That most of all my fears affrayed me;
His body dight with nought but bones, perdie,
The naked shape of man there saw I plain,
All, save the flesh, the sinew, and the vein.

Lastly stood WAR, in glittering arms yclad,
With visage grim, stern looks, and blackly hued,
In his right hand a naked sword he had,
That to the hilts was all with blood embrued;
And in his left, that kings and kingdoms rued,
Famine and fire he held, and therewithal
He razed towns, and threw down towers and all.

Cities he sack'd, and realms that whilom flower'd
In honour, glory, and rule above the best,
He overwhelm'd, and all their fame devour'd,
Consum'd, destroy'd, wasted, and never ceas'd,
Till he their wealth, their name, and all opprest,
His face forehew'd with wounds; and by his side
There hung his targe with gnashes deep and wide.

In midst of which depainted there we found
Deadly DEBATE, all full of snaky hair,
That with a bloody fillet was ybound,
Outbreathing nought but discord every where;
And round about were pourtray'd here and there
The hugy hosts; Darius and his power,
His kings, princes, his peers, and all his power!"* &c.

The merit of these descriptions does not require to

* *Mirror for Magistrates, second edition*, 1563. But these lines are extracted by Warton in his History of English Poetry, which I did not recollect when I first began to transcribe them.

be pointed out. They seem to me more picturesque, and of a more sombre and sublime cast than those of SPENSER himself. I trust my readers will think they illustrate the point, for which I have introduced them.

To return to Collins. His imagination, if not always quite as moral or as bold as Sackville's, was eminently beautiful and brilliant. In the *Ode to the Passions* the personifications are exquisitely picturesque, animated, and appropriate; the language is so purely poetical and finished, and the harmony of the numbers is so felicitous, as to leave it without a rival; and indeed without any attempt at rivalry in its own class.*

Dec. 14, 1808.

ART. DCCLVI.

N°. LVII. *On Book-Making.*

" Nil est deterius latrone rudo;
Nil securius est malo poetâ." MART.

THERE cannot be a question, that re-combining the old materials of literature, without any new results, or even any material improvement of the order and method pursued, to which the term *Book-making* has been contemptuously applied, requires discouragement and censure. It is, no doubt, a common practice in these, and has been in all days, since the first invention of printing.

But it is equally certain that the word so under-

* Mrs. Barbauld has prefixed an excellent Essay on Collins's Poetry, before her edition of his Poems, 1797; but in the view which I have taken, I am not aware that I have interfered with it.

stood is very often most grossly misdirected. This blame is often thrown upon volumes where new results arise from the new position of the matter; where research has been exercised in bringing it forward; or at least an active and cultivated memory employed in forming its new arrangement. As books increase, they still generate the necessity of others; and compilers, though not among the higher ranks of authors, are labourers whose services in the fields of literature are indispensable. They are often requisite to do the drudgery even of first gathering together and binding up the sheaves where others have cut the corn.

He, who tells me that he requires no aid to his memory, and that the repetition of any thing which is to be found in print among the books of his library, is absolutely superfluous, must either deem me very stupid, if he hopes to gain my belief, or must allow me to suppose his books very few, and the course of his studies exceedingly limited. I even consider no small benefit gained, in many cases, by the addition of a few notes, or a better type and paper.

The mere use of paste and scissars, the jumbling together the disjointed parts of books in a different form, merely by way of disguising the piracy, and solely for the purpose of lucre, is indeed vile and highly reprehensible. And every one must observe daily instances of this contemptible abuse.

If vanity induces a man, who dares not trust the powers of his own mind, to grasp at the fame of authorship, by re-editing the works of others, the passion is at least innocent, and often produces effects useful and laudable. But it is something

much better than vanity that frequently generates this exertion. It is often a generous duty; and often a noble desire of a virtuous intellectual occupation in pursuits productive of public instruction or pleasure.

It may be admitted that persons so employed sometimes mistake the value of their materials, and sometimes when they judge rightly of them make a false estimate of the public taste. But for these errors or ill fortunes, no liberal or wise mind will blame their undertakings; nor need they despair that full justice will at length be done them. Time will weigh them in the true balance; and they will find their place according to their worth.

There was a day probably, when old Fuller was confounded by those, who when they get a cant term of censure deal it about them to the right and to the left, and always without discrimination, among the book-makers of his generation! I am afraid he was not totally without an occasional trait or two of it in some of his numerous works. But his predominant merits have made his volumes buoyant over all these prejudices. His *Worthies;* his *Church-History;* his *Abel Redivivus*, &c. not only rise in price, but are found to contain large portions of instructive and amusing matter. His vivacity and his learning have surmounted his quaintness; and his diligence has brought together, if not exclusively preserved, numerous minute notices, which they who love to make the past predominate over the present will always highly value. Loyd, the imitator, and in many parts plagiarist, of Fuller, may more properly be called a book-maker;

but even his volumes contain many memorials, and remarks, which are now become interesting. I cannot say much for poor Winstanley; but we sometimes see that contemptible scribbler quoted to this day by respectable authors; because he has intermixed here and there a scrap or two of original information.

If books were to be written by none but by men of the first genius; and nothing were to be said that had been said before, I am afraid that the lovers of new publications must be without a rational amusement, and the trades of printers and booksellers be nearly annihilated.

But this is the cant of a set of beings, who are determined to find fault, and whose interest and whose malignity it gratifies to deal in censure.

Dec. 17, 1808.

Art. DCCLVII.

N°. LVIII. *On the Reception originally given to Dr. Johnson's Rambler.*

" Not for themselves the toiling artists build,
Not for himself contrives the studious stage:
To distant views by mystic force compell'd,
All give the present to the future age."

Mrs. Carter.

The ill-nature of the world amuses itself with the vanity of authors, who seek consolation for present neglect by anticipating the applause of posterity. It is true that this anticipation is often a bubble blown

up by the fumes of the writer's brain: but it is equally true that men of the greatest genius, who deserve the highest fame, have frequently no other reward, than the well-founded confidence that Time will do them that justice, which is refused them by their cotemporaries.

I am afraid that excellence in many sorts of literary production is rather repulsive to a large portion of readers, as long as they are left to their own unprejudiced judgments. When at length the opinion of the few has prevailed over that of the many, and a reputation has become generally established, the author's works find an universal circulation, because it is fashionable to possess them, and be acquainted with their contents. Of poor Collins, whose Odes could not obtain a vent for one small edition when he first published them himself, impression after impression has been called for since his death, till the number of copies, which in many varied forms in every year are taken off at the market, is beyond calculation.

Sometimes however men live to reap in their own time that esteem and praise, which was long withheld from them. The booksellers, who very naturally and almost of course appreciate the merits of an author's labours by their vendibility, held Dr. Johnson in his latter years in the highest degree of favour. At that time whatever flowed from his pen met with the most flattering reception. But it was not always so. His RAMBLER, which is almost all essence of thought, unalloyed by those baser ingredients which so commonly add to the quantity with-

out adding to the worth of human compositions, experienced at first a general coldness, discouragement, and even censure and ridicule.

The most decisive proof of this will be the following cotemporary extracts from the Correspondence between Mrs. Elizabeth Carter and Miss Talbot. They form a very curious and instructive piece of literary history.

From Miss Talbot, Oct. 20, 1750.

"The RAMBLER is to me very entertaining. The Letter from Mr. Frolick has a certain strain of humour, and the last from Rhodoclea will, if he makes use of it, give him an excellent opportunity to introduce humourous descriptions of, and reflections on, the London follies and diversions, of which she may be supposed to write him the sentiments of her full heart, sometimes rejoiced, sometimes mortified and disappointed. Then another should write by way of contrast, who voluntarily spends hers or his in the country, rationally enjoys it, describes its frosty prospects, land or sea, its Christmas mirth, joy, and hospitality. Mr. JOHNSON would, I fear, be mortified to hear that people know a paper of his own by the same mark of somewhat a little excessive, a little exaggerated in the expression. In his *Schreech-Owl** were *so many* merchants discouraged, *so many* ladies killed, matches broke, poets dismayed! The numbers are too large. Two or three—five or six, is enough in all conscience in most cases. 'Tis else like the Jewish way of

* See No. 59.

speaking, who, to express a man's being rich, say he has 800 ships at sea, and 800 cities on the land."

From Mrs. Carter, March 30, 1752.

"You will think to be sure that I am determined to call you to an account for all your omissions, when I tell you I was outrageous at your not uttering a sigh of lamentation over the departure of the RAMBLER, nor once mention his farewell paper. For some minutes it put me a good deal out of humour with the world, and more particularly with the great and powerful part of it. To be sure people in a closet are apt to form strange odd ideas, which, as soon as they put their heads out of doors, they find to be utterly inconsistent with that something or other that regulates, or rather confounds, the actions of mankind. In mere speculation it seems mighty absurd that those who govern states, and call themselves politicians, should not eagerly decree laurels and statues, and public support to a genius who contributes all in his power to make them the rulers of reasonable creatures. However, as honours and emoluments are by no means the infallible consequences of such an endeavour, Mr. Johnson is very happy in having proposed to himself that reward to his labours which he is sure not to be disappointed of by the stupidity or ingratitude of mankind."

From Miss Talbot, April 22, 1752.

"I must beg a thousand pardons, my dear Miss

Carter, for my absolute silence on the death of that excellent person, the RAMBLER. I assure you, I grieved for it most sincerely, and could have dropt a tear over his two concluding papers, if he had not in one or two places of the last commended himself too much; for I knew there were people whose very unjust prejudices against him would be strengthened by them. Indeed 'tis a sad thing that such a paper should have met with discouragement from wise, and learned, and good people too. Many are the disputes it has cost me, and not once did I come off triumphant. I have heard he means to occasionally throw some papers into the Daily Advertiser; but he has not begun yet, as he is in great affliction I hear, poor man, for the loss of his wife."

From Mrs. Carter, May 9, 1752.

" I congratulate you, dear Miss Talbot, on your retreat from the hurry and flutter of fashionable visiting to the quiet conversation of wood nymphs and hamadryads, and other good sort of company, who have wrought so happy a reformation in you, and taught you to express yourself with becoming sorrow on the death of the RAMBLER. It must be confessed however that you shewed an heroic spirit in defending his cause against such formidable enemies even in London. Many a battle have I too fought for him in the country, but with very little success. Indeed I was extremely disheartened in my last defeat in argument with a lady of excellent skill in the weapons of plausibility, who so absolutely got the better of me, that after having dis-

played the whole force of my eloquence, with no manner of effect on her understanding, in defence of the RAMBLER, she afterwards almost convinced me that there was a tolerable degree of merit in the idle foolish farce of "Miss in her Teens." I must positively take care how I venture to engage with her again, for fear she should take it into her head to convince me of the wit, good sense, and morality of ——— Mrs. Cibber's Oracle."*

Had Johnson, instead of dealing in general truths, exercised his pen in temporary and personal descriptions of manners and characters, he would have instantly engaged the attention of vulgar minds, and procured present fame to his essays; but he would have composed them of fading materials, which would long since have perished and been forgotten.—It is probable that those papers in the Spectator, which, sporting with the little foibles and petty customs of the day, have long since lost their interest, and are now only an incumbrance to the work, were, when first published the most popular.

The fate of the RAMBLER holds out a lesson of encouragement to the virtuous exertions of a pure and unsophisticated mind. To such a mind the passing subjects of fashionable interest in the intercourse of familiar life, are unattractive, and even contemptible. "I have never," says Johnson, "complied with temporary curiosity, nor enabled my readers to discuss the topic of the day. I have

* From Mrs. Carter's Letters.

rarely exemplified my assertions by living characters; in my papers no man could look for censures of his enemies, or praises of himself, and they only were expected to peruse them, whose passions left them leisure for abstracted truth, and whom virtue could please by its naked dignity."

It would be uncandid to deny that the criticism of Miss Talbot on these Essays is just. Johnson wants the happy ease of Addison, whose exquisitely nice touches of character were beyond the attainment of his successor, both in point of perception and language. The pen of Johnson makes its strokes with a heavy and laborious hand; but the strokes have force and truth, though perhaps a little exaggerated. —If there be "the nodosity of the oak," there is also "its strength." Johnson had not in early life, like Addison, been familiar with the circles of polished society; and the structure of his own mind and disposition was not calculated to counteract this deficiency. He was indeed so far from wanting a moral sensibility, that it predominated in every act and expression of his life. It flowed from a constant contemplation of the frailties and sorrows of human nature. But he wanted those delicate and excessive feelings, which are instantaneous; and too often are opposite to reason; never the result of it. His characters of FROLICK and RHODOCLEA, if full of good sense, are coarse; the outline is well drawn, but it is not filled up with felicity or niceness; the colours are laid on with a trowel; and the lights and shades are not happily blended.

But what human work is perfect? And what author, unless Shakspeare, ever possessed every

varied excellence? There is merit enough in the RAMBLER to reflect eternal disgrace on its cotemporaries, by whom it was so coldly received.

Jan. 14, 1809.

ART. DCCLVIII.

N°. LIX. *On the Love of Fame.*

"Fame is the spur which the clear spirit doth raise
To scorn delights, and live laborious days."

MILTON.

THE love of Fame, if we limit the word to the result of virtuous and honourable exertions, burns brightest in those bosoms, whose powers are best adapted to attain it. It is a generous passion, which is unfelt by selfish minds. Its gratifications are generally ideal; and remote both in point of time and place.

The effects of wealth and titles come home to the presence of the possessor; they feed his sensual gratifications, and are seen by the eye, and heard by the ear. The ardour therefore with which they are pursued, and the sacrifices which are made to acquire them, are perfectly consistent with the most narrow and the basest motives.

It may be admitted, that of Fame, which is justly won, these observations are not equally applicable to every different kind. Of a warrior the fame in some degree surrounds him; accompanies his footsteps; precedes his march; and follows at his heels. Nor is the orator unattended by a reward which comes directly home to him. All these recompences

however are empty sound to the selfish disposition; which demands something that it deems more solid; that is, something better calculated to please the part of our nature approaching nearest to the brutes of the field.

Of all Fame, the passion for literary Fame is the most praiseworthy, as it is the purest, the most abstract, and the least liable to the suspicion of being intermingled with those grovelling views, which would debase it. Its nutriment is airy food; it is cheered by sounds which are not heard by common ears; and the chaplets with which it is crowned are invisible to common eyes.

He who gives up his days and nights to win esteem by his intellectual exertions from those who are capable of appreciating his merits, or receiving pleasure from his productions, is treated by his neighbours, and by those among whom he is thrown by the common intercourse of life, with coldness and neglect, if not dislike. To their vulgar judgments it would be the highest presumption and ignorance to place him in competition with Folly or Vice themselves, should they possess more rank, or a better fortune.

True it is that this ordinary and contemptible estimate prevails more in country neighbourhoods than in a metropolis; and I am not sure that if a man of genius have any alloy in his desire of renown, he ought to pass his life among rural acquaintances. But, O! how much would he lose by the exchange! Airs of heaven, that blow upon the breast of the poet in all your purity, and fan his solitary and uninterrupted meditations! Leaves,

that spread yourselves beneath his feet, and delight his senses with your fragrance! Deep woods, that shelter from his sight the polluted haunts of men! And songs of birds, whose tender notes, distinctly thrilling the quiet atmosphere, make him forget the hum and clamour of distracted cities! Would he forsake the exquisite enjoyments, which you afford him, for a little addition of stupid flattery?

If there should be any one so mistaken as to fix on the pursuit of literature for any other purposes than the intrinsic pleasure which it affords, and the honourable fame, which may be the remote reward of the instruction or the amusement it will confer; bitter disappointment will be the almost necessary consequence of his error. It is not an occupation fitted for the ends of the worldling. The castles which it builds in the clouds give no satisfaction to him; and the "ideal nothing," in which its riches consist, in his opinion only deserves the pity, which is excited by the straw crowns of the maniac.

But we cannot suppose that this intense desire of Fame, as well future as distant, is implanted in us for nothing: we cannot suppose it would be most violent in those endowed with the highest qualities both of head and heart, unless for some wise and important purposes. Nor does it seem to me consistent with the benevolence and justice of the Creator to animate us with the wish for *delusive* rewards as the result of virtuous exertions. I can never therefore bring my mind to believe that that fame which is sought and won by the pure efforts of intellectual labour, is, when obtained, hollow and valueless.

Let us instance in Milton. Giving all the credit, which has ever been demanded, to his genius; yet before he could raise his talents to that admirable command of fancy and language, which the progressive productions of his Muse exhibit, can we doubt that it cost him continued toils, repeated self-denials, years of ordinary pleasures foregone, and a thousand sensual wishes conquered? When we compare the time of his life thus spent with the mode in which the generality consume it, what a very exalted station must he hold in our opinions? Was not the hope of that station the solace of many weary and ill-paid fatigues, many outwatchings of the Bear?" Perhaps it may be observed, that if these exertions were virtuous, he will enjoy in common with others the rewards of virtue. But if these rewards were sufficient to excite him to exertions of a kind so extraordinary, why should he be led on by the auxiliary motive of a false hope?

The future is unknown to us; the world of spirits, with their occupations and enjoyments, is hid from our narrow sight. Perhaps, since the grave has closed over the body of this illustrious bard, it has been one of the exquisite enjoyments of his angelic soul to listen to the increasing praises, which have continued to swell, in louder and louder tones, over every enlightened nation of the earth!

Jan. 16, 1809.

Art. DCCLIX.

N°. LX. *A new Translation of Martial's Epigram on the chief ingredients of human happiness; with remarks on the capabilities of the* Sonnet.

" How blest, who thus, by added years improv'd,
With cautious steps their lengthen'd journey tread;
And from the task of sultry life remov'd,
Converse with wisdom in its evening shade."

Mrs. Carter.

I am indebted to Mr. Lofft for the excellent accompanying translation of the following beautiful Epigram of Martial. I need scarcely apprise my readers that the original has been introduced before in these Essays, N°. IV.

Martialis,
L. X. 47.

Ultimo versu auctum.

Epigramma.

" Vitam quæ faciunt beatiorem,
Jucundissime Martialis, hæc sunt:
Res non parta labore, sed relicta;
Non ingratus ager; focus perennis;
Lis nunquam; toga rara; mens quieta;
Vires ingenuæ; salubre corpus;
Prudens simplicitas; pares amici;
Convictus facilis; sine arte mensa;
Nox non ebria, sed soluta curis;
Non tristis torus; attamen pudicus;
Somnus qui faciat breves tenebras;
Quod sis, esse velis, nihilque malis;

Summum nec metuas diem, nec optes;
Lætus præteriti; post fata felix."

" TRANSLATION.

" These blessings, without more, most pleasant friend,
The real happiness of life compose:
Competence, which unearnt by Labour flows;
Inherited; a kindly farm to tend;
No suits to vex; some business to attend;
Ingenuous Strength; Health which contentment knows;
Prudent simplicity; Friendship which glows
Liberal and equal; Converse to unbend;
A modest board; hearth always warm and bright;
Nights from intemperance free alike and cares;
A bed which constant chaste affection shares;
Slumbers which gently yield to cheerful light:
Be what thou art; and wish not more to be;
And pleas'd with time await eternity."

C. L.

Troston, 11 Jan. 1809.

" The exquisite Epigram," continues Mr. LOFFT, " which I have transcribed on the other side, has tempted me to venture on a translation. You are aware that every thing with me converts itself into a SONNET: not unnaturally, I think; since the resemblance of many of the best *Sonnets* to the best *Epigrams*, (those on the Greek model) is very obvious. And in this class the Epigram of Martial stands very high indeed. By attempting to translate I am become more sensible of its completeness; and of its exquisite and perfect beauty, in diction, numbers, and sentiment. The translation of so sweet a writer, (where he writes in his own unaffected

manner, and not in the vicious taste of his times as COWLEY is, perhaps) is liable to little objection but diffusiveness; except the '*if not all*,'* which supposes a defectiveness by no means I think imputable to this pure and delightful summary of genuine felicity in this life. To look *beyond* with assured hope could hardly be the lot of the best philosophers and men, *before Christianity;* and we know that it was not. This idea I have ventured to supply by a closing line, which at the same time brings the whole into the form of a *Quatuorzain.*

"That the SONNET is favourable to condensation of thought is clear from theory and experience; when the subject is well chosen and suitably treated. And condensed as the original is, I think I have expressed its ideas without omission in an *equal* number of lines. I flatter myself I shall prove that no subject worthy of poetry is so great and comprehensive, as not to have been with becoming dignity expressed in this form. And indeed I hardly know, or can imagine any subject which is worthy of the Muse, which has not been thus included. And it is the glory of the Sonnet to add that it has most rarely been disgraced by an unworthy subject."†

* The first line of Cowley's translation is,

"These are the chief ingredients, *if not all.*"

† I cannot refrain from adding the following passages of Mr. LOFFT's letter, (which seem more properly placed in a note) though I have to apologize for the unmerited expressions of kindness regarding myself which occur in them. The benevolent writer refers to some peevish expressions regarding the bar, which I had presumed to use in No. IV. of *the Ruminator.*

I feel no common pleasure in being able to prove the justness of these observations of Mr. LOFFT, by one of his own Sonnets, than which a nobler does not exist in the English language, even including those of Milton.

"SONNET.

Occasioned by one of Miss Caroline Symmons "on a blighted Rose-bud," written in her 12th year; she having herself fallen a victim to a consumption at the age of fourteen years and one month, on June 1, 1803.

"O what a length of days indulg'd to me,
Who little have employ'd the boon of time!
While thee Death cropt in the first dawn of prime;

"I have treated," continues he, "*the forensic gown*, with tenderness; indeed with affection: for although in more than thirty years my gown has brought me but little profit, and perhaps not much of fame, it would be disingenuous not to own, that both it and the profession, have been, and I trust always will remain exceeding dear to me. And I cannot do otherwise than acknowledge, that I wish the ingenuous delicacy of your mind would have permitted you to have continued in it. Where, to be silent as to any living characters, we can think of such men (all of them more or less cotemporaries) as Mr. Charles Yorke, the Earl of Hardwicke, Earl Camden, the Earl of Mansfield, Mr. John Lee, Sir Michael Foster, Sir William Blackstone, Sir William Jones, it conveys the pleasing and satisfactory sentiment that the ENGLISH BAR has been, and may it ever be, not incompatible with the most elegant, the most enlightened, the most cultivated, vigorous, upright, and comprehensive minds; with the steadiest attachment to freedom, to their country, and to the best interests of human society: that it may ever supply the most splendid, noblest, and most permanently effectual opportunities of promoting all these pure and sublime objects!"——

Sweet, and hope-breathing Flower! How ill agree
Such hopes, such early Fate!—But no:—to thee
  Expands the beauty of a purer clime;
  The external radiance of that blest Sublime,
Which tenderest Innocence may happiest see!—
And such the will of Heaven. Nor could it speak
  More clearly to mankind.—That loveliest bloom,
That Morn of Promise which began to break,
  Clos'd in the dreary darkness of the tomb,
Proclaim: '*Look, Mortals, to that world on high,*
Where Sweetness, Genius, Goodness cannot die.'

C. L. 4 Jan. 1804."*

However unequal the following may be to the subject, it is a tribute which the feelings of my heart demand that I should not withhold.

To Capel Lofft, Esq.

On reading the last Sonnet.

Son of the Muse, urge thy untir'd career
  Right onward through the clouds of worldly wrong;
  Thro' all the ills that round life's pathway throng;
Nor flag thy plumes at Envy's frown severe;
Nor listen to the baleful Critic's sneer;
  With voice unfaultering speed the moral song;
  And pour the copious stream of Truth along!

* This is taken from "Laura," or Select Sonnets and Quatuorzains," a work *since* published—containing the most copious collection of compositions of this kind ever made, not only English, but both original and translations from the Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, French, and German—which will raise admiration in every enlightened mind, not only at the industry but at the learning and genius of the accomplished and amiable collector, who has himself executed the major part of the translations; and many of them with a happiness which will be sure in time to find its due praise.

Genius shall strains like these delighted hear,
And Virtue with a swelling breast attend
  Enraptur'd on the lay. The holy Muse
Of Milton's self from yonder clouds shall bend,
  And on thy lyre drop fresh Castalian dews;
While Petrarch and deep Dante clap their wings,
And each in blended notes about thee sings.

Jan. 17, 1809.

Art. DCCLX.

N°. LXI. *On Birth.*

"Fortes creantur fortibus et bonis;
Est in juvencis, est in equis patrum
Virtus." Hor.

All the arguments, which have been urged to depreciate the lustre of high birth, apply only to an abuse of its advantages. No one of strong sense, no one of elevated sentiments, could ever for a moment suppose it a substitute for virtue, or talents. If on the contrary it does not operate as an incentive to the strenuous cultivation of the mind; to an honourable ambition, and to noble actions; it has really an injurious effect, for it exposes mediocrity of character, and still more it exhibits deficiencies, in a light more glaring by the contrast.

But let men boast of their splendid descent as they will, its glory must be considered as at best dormant, till accompanied by personal merit. There is no doubt that it gilds and graces the fame of a conspicuous character, but let him, whose personal

qualities are obscure, reserve it till it can be brought to co-operate with his own exertions.

The numbers are great of those, who presume to rest their claims to distinction on the merits of their ancestors alone. But what wise or spirited person will forbear to express scorn for such empty boasts? Birth cannot put itself in competition with genius or virtue; it is only in conjunction with these that it displays a genuine brightness. On this account equal pretensions to birth alone, without the aid of something more, can never put persons on an equality.

The various ways in which the consciousness of a brilliant descent influences an active rich and generous mind, it would require a wider space and deeper investigation to develope, than this cursory Essay will allow. It fans hope; impels a daring courage; breathes a generous complacency; calls forth a noble scorn of what is mean and vulgar, and directs the aspiring ambition to rule the empire of minds, if not of material kingdoms. It sets the possessor above the intimidation of ordinary greatness; and teaches him to treat the mean gewgaws with which undeserved elevation, or upstart wealth, endeavour to dazzle the world, with playful or indignant contempt.

Conscious that he has no obscurity in his origin which can be urged to disqualify him from those lofty stations, which his own efforts are put forth to acquire, he proceeds to his point firm and undaunted. There is a sort of self-depreciation in those who do not possess birth, which too frequently operates secretly to depress a noble ambition. The advan-

tage of that feeling which had been so well expressed,

—— Possunt, quia posse videntur,

is wanting in them. I say frequently, for it is not always so in minds, that ought to be conscious of it; and on the other hand it in too many cases controuls the aspirations of minds that ought not to be controlled by it.

The greatest characters have in very numerous instances risen from the most obscure progenitors. There is something animating in the contemplation of men who could thus emerge from the clouds and oppressions of an humble station, and who could break from the bonds of those circumstances in which it has too generally happened, that

Chill penury repress'd their noble rage,
And froze the genial current of the soul.

At the same time it must be admitted, that low men derive from their condition some qualifications for rising in the world, which are not possessed by those who have been born and educated in the higher walks of life. Necessity will be content under many privations, and reconcile itself to many submissions, which a nobler spirit would spurn. Elevation is as often gained by corruption, and wicked compliances, as by merit. Greatness therefore and worldly prosperity are not in themselves proofs or even strong presumptions of desert in those who have been the fabricators of their own fortunes. We must scrupulously examine the grounds and nature of the progress of a vulgar man from its first point to

wealth, place and honours, before we can pronounce that the consideration of his origin increases the glory of his subsequent distinction.

Of the major portion of those who have been thus exalted, I suspect it will be found, that neither superior virtues, nor superior talents have been the main ingredients of their prosperity; but habits of accommodation, of which their better-descended and more highly endowed rivals could not brook the practice.

Let me be excused for closing this Essay with a celebrated and often-cited passage from Lord Bacon.

"As for nobility in particular persons, it is a reverend thing to see an ancient castle or building not in decay; or to see a fair timber-tree sound and perfect; how much more to behold an ancient noble family, which hath stood against the waves and weathers of time. Those that are first raised to nobility, are commonly more virtuous* but less innocent, than their descendants; for there is rarely any rising, but by a commixture of good and evil arts: but it is reason the memory of their virtues remain to their posterity, and their faults die with themselves. Nobility of birth commonly abateth industry; and he that is not industrious envieth him that is. Besides, noble persons cannot go much higher; and he that standeth at a stay, where others rise, can hardly avoid motions of envy. On the other side, nobility extinguisheth the passive

* Here virtuous must be used as synonimous to active and full of exertion.

envy from others towards them, because they are in possession of honour. Certainly kings that have able men of their nobility, shall find ease in employing them; and a better slide into their business; for people naturally bend to them, as born in some sort to command." *

Jan. 18, 1809.

Art. DCCLXI.

N°. LXII. *On the Impolicy of Complaint.*

" ——— though fall'n on evil days,
On evil days though fall'n, and evil tongues;
In darkness, and with dangers compass'd round."
MILTON.

JOHNSON, in his Life of Cowley, says, that after the Restoration that poet having missed the Mastership of the Savoy, " published his pretensions and his discontent, in an Ode called THE COMPLAINT; in which he styles himself the *melancholy* Cowley. This met with the usual fortune of complaints, and seems to have excited more contempt than pity."

I am afraid that the remark, if applied to the generality of mankind, is too true; but it ought not to have been spoken so irreverently of such a man as Cowley; nor without a strong reprobation of its illiberality and injustice. There is on the contrary a sarcastic tone in the critic's expressions, as if he thought the world on such occasions were in the right.

* Bacon's Essays—N°. XV. on Nobility.

We are, no doubt, too disgracefully inclined to estimate people according to their prosperity. Success is deemed the sure test of ability or virtue. He therefore, who would stand well in the opinion of the coarse, which is the major part of society, should never complain. He should, on the other hand, pass unnoticed every affront, conceal every miscarriage, boast of his friends, and exult in his good luck. Sighs and melancholy will only be deemed the proofs of ill fortune; and ill fortune will be the signal for new attempts at injury and defeat. The world is like a herd of deer, that always set themselves upon the wounded stag.

It is among the most prominent frailties of "base mankind" to give a helping hand to those who do not want it, and withhold it from those who do. One success leads to another; and one injustice to another. "Woes cluster;" and he, who has received a wrong from one neighbour or alliance, is much more exposed to a second from some quarter, which was before well intentioned towards him, than if the first had never happened. Nothing but sad and repeated experience will induce the honourable and pure-hearted to believe this frightful truth. One would have thought that injuries heaped on an undeserving head would operate as motives for the counterbalancing kindness of benefits even before unthought of. Alas! No! The example is more effective than the warning. The bad passions of our nature are drawn into play. What one has done without meeting the opprobrium of the world, another may safely indulge in.

I should have extended this paper; but, alas! the melancholy events announced from Spain stop my pen; and the press admits of no delay till I can compose my agitated spirits.

All I can say now is, that the terms of contempt in which Johnson concurs, regarding *Cowley's Complaint*,* disgrace himself. It is one of the finest of his Poems; beautiful and affecting in its sentiments, and admirably happy, for the most part, in its vigorous and eloquent language. And as to the disclosure of ill usage, which reflects real shame only on its propagators, if it draw forth the scorn of the vulgar-hearted on the innocent sufferer, such frank and ingenuous pictures of the feelings of a pathetic or indignant bosom will always secure the sympathy, the love, the esteem, and gratitude of the wise and the good.

Jan. 25, 1809.

* "The plan of this poem," says Dr. Hurd, "is highly poetical: and though the numbers be not the most pleasing," (a position in which I cannot agree with him) "the expression is almost every where natural and beautiful. But its principal charm is that air of melancholy, thrown over the whole, so expressive of the poet's character. The address of the writer is seen in conveying his just reproaches on the court, under a pretended vindication of it against the Muse." *Hurd's Cowley.*

Art. DCCLXII.

N°. LXIII. *Lines by Bloomfield on his Mother's Spindle.*

" How sometimes Nature will betray its folly;
Its tenderness; and make itself a pastime
To harder bosoms!" SHAKSPEARE.

" All love the womb that their first being bred."
IBID.

Every one is acquainted with the pastoral poetry of Bloomfield. It is not so generally known, with what wonderful power and pathos he can write in blank verse.

" *Robert Bloomfield to his Mother's Spindle.*

TO A SPINDLE.*

" Relic! I will not bow to thee nor worship!
Yet treasure as thou art, remembrancer

* " The portrait of my mother," says Bloomfield, " was taken on her last visit to London, in the summer of 1804. During the period of evident decline in her strength and faculties, she conceived, in place of that patient resignation, which she had before felt, an ungovernable dread of ultimate want, and observed to a relative with peculiar emphasis, ' that to meet WINTER, OLD AGE, and POVERTY, was like meeting three great giants.' To the last hour of her life she was an excellent spinner; and latterly, the peculiar kind of wool which she spun was bought exclusively for her, as being the only one in the village, who exercised their industry on so fine a sort. During the tearful paroxysms of her last depression she spun with the utmost violence, and with vehemence exclaimed ' *I must spin.*' A paralytic affection struck her whole side while at work, and obliged her to quit her spindle when only half filled, and she died within a fortnight afterwards! I have that

Of sunny days, that ever haunt my dreams,
When thy brown fellows as a task I twirl'd,
And sung my ditties ere the farm receiv'd
My vagrant foot, and with its liberty
And all its cheerful buds and opening flowers
Had taught my heart to wander.
Relic of affection, come;
Thou shalt a moral teach to me and mine.
The hand that wound thee smooth is cold, and spins
No more. Debility press'd hard around
The seat of life, and terrors fill'd her brain;
Nor causeless terrors: giants grim and bold,
Three mighty ones she feared to meet; they came—
WINTER, OLD AGE, and POVERTY, all came:
The last had dropp'd his club, yet fancy made
Him formidable; and when Death beheld
Her tribulation, he fulfill'd his task,
And to her trembling hand and heart at once,
Cried, 'spin no more;' thou then wert left half fill'd
With this soft downy fleece, such as she wound
Through all her days! She who could spin so well!
Half fill'd wert thou, half finish'd when she died.
Half finish'd! 'tis the motto of the world!
We spin vain threads, and dream, and strive, and die,
With sillier things than Spindles in our hands.
Then feeling, as I do, resistlessly
The bias set upon my soul for verse,
Oh! should old age still find my brain at work,
And Death, o'er some poor fragment striding, cry,
'Hold! spin no more!' Grant Heav'n that purity

spindle pow. She was buried on the last day of the year 1804. She returned from her visit to London on Friday the 29th of June, just to a day twenty-three years after she brought me to London, which was also on a Friday, in the year 1781." *Bloomfield.*

Of thought and texture may assimilate
That fragment unto thee, in usefulness,
In strength, and snowy innocence. Then shall
The village schoolmistress shine brighter, through
The exit of her boy; and both shall live,
And virtue triumph too, and virtue's tears,
Like Heav'n's pure blessings, fall upon her grave."*

There is no reader of English poetry, who does not recollect Cowper's exquisite lines on his Mother's Picture. This fragment of Bloomfield forms a noble companion to them. It strikes me to be written in a loftier tone, and still more excellent manner than any of his other productions. Let him give new delight and astonishment to the world by a moral and descriptive poem in blank verse!

Jan. 26, 1809.

Art. DCCLXIII.

N°. LXIV. *Memoir of William Habington.*

"Dignum laude virum Musa vetat mori." Hor.

The following has been recovered by my friend Mr. Nichols, from a mass of papers.

Oct. 11, 1797.

William Habington, a poet and historian of the last century, seems to have received less notice from posterity than he deserves. The principal particulars of his life and family are to be found in Wood's

* The whole of this is taken from the interesting memoir by Brayley, which accompanies Storer and Greig's illustrations of Bloomfield, 1806. 4to.

Athenæ, II. 110; and Nash's Worcestershire, I. 588. I shall select such as appear necessary to the illustration of his character and writings.

Richard Habington of Brockhampton, in Herefordshire, of a very ancient family, had three sons; Richard, the eldest, of Brockhampton, left a daughter and coheir Eleanor, who marrying Sir Thomas Baskerville left a daughter and heir Eleanor, wife of John Talbot of Longford in Shropshire, father by her of John, 10th Earl of Shrewsbury.* John Habington, second son, was Cofferer to Queen Elizabeth. In fifth of that Queen's reign he bought the manor of Hindlip, in Worcestershire. He was born 1515; rebuilt the mansion about 1572, and died 1581. By Katherine daughter of John Wykes of Morton-Jeffreys he left issue Thomas Habington his eldest son, born at Thorpe in Surry, 1560; godson of Q. Eliz. who after having studied at Oxford, and travelled to Rheims and Paris, connected himself on his return with those who laboured to release Mary Queen of Scots; and contrived many hiding holes in his curious old seat, lately remaining.† On the discovery of Babington's conspiracy, 1586, for which his brother Edward, a dangerous and turbulent man, suffered death, (see a minute account of it in Camden's history of this reign, in Kennet, II. 515—518)‡ he fell under strong suspicions, and

* Coll. Peer. iii. p. 27. † See an engraving of it in Nash.

‡ The conspirators were Anthony Babington of Dethick-Hall, in Ashover, Derbyshire (see Pilkington's Derbyshire, II. p. 326); John Savage, a bastard; Gilbert Gifford, of the family of Chillington, Co. Staff.; John Ballard, a priest of Rheims; Edward Windsor, brother to Lord Windsor; Thomas Salisbury, of a good family in

was committed prisoner to the Tower, where he remained six years, and is said only to have saved his life by being Elizabeth's godson.* Here he consoled himself by deep study, and treasured up the principal part of that learning by which he was afterwards distinguished. He was at length permitted to retire to Hindlip, and married Mary eldest daughter of Edward Parker Lord Morley, (by Elizabeth daughter and sole heir of Sir William Stanley, Lord Montegle) the descendant of the learned Henry Parker, Lord Morley, temp. Hen. VIII. of whom see Walpole's Royal and Noble Authors, I. 92. Notwithstanding his escape, he could not help being so far implicated in the Gunpowder Plot as to conceal Garnet, Oldcorn, and others in his house, for which he was condemned to die, but by the intercession of his brother-in-law, Lord Morley, who was the means of its discovery by communicating a letter of warning, supposed to have been written by his sister, (Mrs. Habington) he was again saved; and pardoned on condition of never stirring out of Worcestershire. He made good use of his future time; entirely addicting himself to study; and living to the great age of 87, Oct. 8, 1647. During

Denbighshire; Charles Tilney, the last of an ancient house, and one of the Band of Gentlemen-Pensioners to the Queen; Chidiock Tichburn of Southampton; *Edward* Abington; Robert Gage of Surry; John Travers, and John Charnock of Lancashire; John Jones, whose father was Yeoman or Keeper of the Wardrobe to Queen Mary; Barnewal, of a noble family in Ireland; and Henry Dun, Clerk in the Office of First Fruits and Tenths; and one Polly a supposed spy on them. *Camd. ut supr.*

* Wood, II. 110.

this period, he collected the materials for the history of his native county, on which Dr. Nash's excellent Collections are built. Wood says he had seen part of these MSS. and that "every leaf was a sufficient testimony of his generous and virtuous mind, of his indefatigable industry, and infinite reading."

WILLIAM HABINGTON, his eldest son, was born at Hindlip, Nov. 5, 1605, was educated in the Jesuits' College at St. Omer's, and afterwards at Paris, and in the first of these was earnestly invited to take upon him the habit of the order; but excused himself and left them. After his return from Paris he was instructed by his father in history, and became an accomplished gentleman. He married Lucy daughter of William Herbert first Lord Powis* by Eleanor daughter of Henry Percy, 8th Earl of Northumberland, by Katherine daughter and coheir of John Neville, Lord Latimer.†

History has preserved but little of his character, but while nothing contradictory to them is recorded, we have a right to deduce the colour of it from his writings. From these he appears to have been distinguished for connubial felicity, for a love of retirement and study, and for the elegance and dignity of his sentiments. In 1635, when he was thirty years old, he published in 8vo. a little volume of poems, entitled *Castara*, under which name he cele-

* He died at Hendon in Middlesex, March 6, 1655, and was succeeded by Percy Herbert, 2d Lord Powis, who died 1666, and whose daughter Mary, married George Lord Talbot, son of John Earl of Shrewsbury. Dugd. Bar. II. 261.

† Coll. Peer. II. p. 407.

brates his wife. This kind of title was the fashion of the day: thus *Lovelace* immortalized his mistress under the name of *Lucasta*. The third edition of *Castara*, in 1640, *duodec.* now lies before me. It is divided into three parts; the first is "THE MISTRESS," prefaced by a prose description: this consists of verses addressed to her before marriage. The second part, is "THE WIFE," prefaced in a similar manner. This part is followed by "THE FRIEND," containing eight elegies on the death of his kinsman, the Hon. George Talbot, who must have been one of the three younger sons of John Talbot of Longford, whose names are not mentioned in Collins's Peerage, Vol. III. p. 27.* The third part, is the "HOLY MAN," and consists of paraphrases of the Psalms.

In the author's prefatory address to the public, he says, that "love stole some hours from business and his more serious study." But he does not claim from hence the sacred name of poet, like those "who can give no nobler testimony of twenty years employment than some loose copies of lust happily expressed." To that, "he shall not dare by this essay to lay any title, since more sweat and oil he must spend, who shall arrogate so excellent an attribute." The praise he lays a very just claim to, is that of a *chaste* Muse. "Had I slept," says he, "in the silence of my acquaintance, and affected no study beyond that which the chace or field allows, poetry had then been no scandal upon me, and the

* P. 33 he is called *uncle* to the Earl of Shrewsbury, who must have been John 10th Earl, who died 1653.

love of learning no suspicion of ill husbandry. But what malice begot in the country upon ignorance, or in the city upon criticism, shall prepare against me, I am armed to endure."——" I think even these verses will have that proportion in the world's opinion, that heaven hath allotted me in fortune; not so high as to be wondered at, nor so low as to be contemned."

After the preface follow some verses to him by George Talbot beforementioned, in which he says,

" ——————— We too are knowne
To th' world as to ourselves, to be but one
In blood as study: and my careful love
Did never action worth my name, approve,
Which serv'd not thee."

Afterwards he says,

" ——————— I boldly can
Stile thee more than good poet,—a good man."

Habington's sixth poem is addressed " to his honoured friend Mr. E. P." [*Endymion Porter*] whom he describes " not always in the shine of kings," sometimes retiring to the holy shade of the Muses. The seventh to Castara, in praise of content and the calm happiness of the country at Hindlip, is exquisitely delicate, and poetical. Warton, in his edition of the " Juvenile poems of Milton," p. 45, refers to a passage in this beautiful ode: but appears to have been himself unacquainted with these poems, the passage having been pointed out by Mr. Bowle; otherwise his candour, taste,

and accuracy, could never have been guilty of talking of "an obscure poet, *John* Habington." He very properly calls what he cites "an *elegant* triplet." The tenth poem is addressed to the honourable his much-honoured friend R. B. Esq." [Robert Brudenell] afterwards 2d Earl of Cardigan, a man, who lived to the great age of 96, being born March 5, 1607, and did not die till July 16, 1703: he had the misfortune to be father to the infamous Countess of Shrewsbury, (widow of George Talbot's younger brother, Earl Francis) who held the Duke of Buckingham's horse in the disguise of a page, when he fought and killed her husband. Her sister, the Countess of Westmoreland, died in 1739 at the age of 91.*

"While you dare trust the loudest tongue of fame,
The zeale you beare your mistresse to proclaim,
To th' talking world: I in the silent'st grove,
Scarce to myself dare whisper that I love.
Thee titles, Brud'nell, riches thee adorne;
And vigorous youth, to vice not headlong borne,
By th' tide of Custome: which I value more
Than what blind superstition's fools adore;
Who greatnesse in the chaire of blisse enthrone,
Greatnesse we borrow, vertue is our own."†

The 13th poem is "to the right honourable the Countesse of Ar." who must have been Margaret, daughter of William Douglas, Earl of Morton, wife of Archibald 8th Earl of Argyle. The 19th is

* Coll. Peer. II. 499. III. 27. Walp. R & N. Auth. Grammont's Mem. &c.

† P. 10.

" *A Dialogue betweene Hope and Feare.*

Feare. " Checke thy forward thoughts, and know
Hymen only joynes their hands,
Who with even paces goe,
Shee in gold, he rich in lands.

Hope. But Castara's purer fire,
When it meetes a noble flame,
Shuns the smoke of such desire,
Joynes with love, and burnes the same.

Feare. Yet obedience must prevaile,
They, who o're her actions sway,
Wou'd have her in th' ocean saile,
And contemne thy narrow sea.

Hope. Parents' lawes must beare no weight,
When they happinesse prevent;
And our sea is not so streight,
But it roome hath for content.

Feare. Thousand hearts as victims stand,
At the altar of her eyes:
And will partiall she command,
Onely thine for sacrifice?

Hope. Thousand victims must returne;
Shee the purest will designe:
Choose Castara which shall burne,
Choose the purest, that is mine."*

In a short address " to The Thames," p. 32. he speaks of " Faire *Seymors*, on the banks of *Marlow*." P. 43, is a poem " to Seymors, the house in which Castara resided."

* Pp. 20, 21.

In p. 39, a poem to Mr. George Talbot begins with the following noble lines:

" Thrice hath the pale-fac'd empresse of the night,
Lent in her chaste increase her borrowed light
To guide the vowing marriner: since mute,
Talbot, th'ast beene, too slothfull to salute
Thy exil'd servant. Labour not t'excuse
This dull neglect: love never wants a muse.
When thunder summons from eternall sleepe
Th' imprison'd ghosts, and spreads o'th' frighted deepe
A veile of darknesse; penitent to be
I may forget, yet still remember thee,
Next to my faire, under whose eye-lids move,
In nimble measures, beauty, wit, and love."

In p. 50, are some lines to Lady Eleanor Powis, Castara's mother, in which he appeals to the superiority of her judgment over the glitter of wealth and station; and demands, if rich with a little, they may not be lifted by mutual love, to a greatness above what riches can confer. He dares not, he says, when he surveys the beauty of Castara's hand, ascribe the brightness of its veins to the blood of *Charlemaigne*, which flows in them through her, or the united streams of Marmion, Rosse, Parr, Fitzhugh, and St. Quintin, which add their lustre to the Pembroke family. Would that Castara were the daughter of some mountain-cottager, who could leave her no other dower than what she derived from the bounty of nature! He would then lead her to the temple, rich in her own wealth.

——" Then all who vaunt
That fortune, them t'enrich, made others want,

Should set themselves out glorious in her stealth,
And trie if that could parallel this wealth."

P. 52, is a poem, "To the honourable Mr. Wm. E." reprinted in Headley's 2d vol. pp. 19, 20.

In another poem, "To Castara, on the Vanity of Avarice," p. 56, he says,

"I'de rather like the violet grow
Unmarkt i' th' shaded vale,
Than on the hill those terrors know
Are breath'd forth by an angry gale;
There is more pompe above, more sweete below."

The verses, p. 58, are to his "honoured friend and kinsman, R. St. Esquire." It does not give me pain, says he, if what I write is held no wit at court. Let those who teach their muse the art of winning on easy greatness, or the spruce young lawyer, 'who is all impudence and tongue,' endeavour to divulge their fames, by which the one may get employ, and the other fees, I embrace silence, and that fate which placed my birth so happily, that I am neither depressed by want, nor flattered by riches into pride. Why are some poets always railing, and steeping their rhymes in gall; as if there was no crime that called so loudly for the vengeance of heaven as the poverty of a few writers? It is true, that Chapman's reverend ashes have been mingled with the vulgar dust for want of a tomb; yet we need not despair, that some devout lover of poetry may yet build him a monument.

"Since *Spencer* hath a stone; and *Drayton's* browes
Stand petrefied; th' wall, with laurell bowes

Yet girt about; and nigh wise *Henrie's* hearse,
Old *Chaucer* got a marble for his verse.
So courteous is Death; Death poets brings
So high a pompe to lodge them with their kings;
Yet still they mutiny."

" If some please their patrons with hyperboles, or mysterious nonsense, and then complain, if they are not noticed, that the state neglects men of parts; and seem to think all other kinds of excellence unworthy of reputation, let us set so just a value on knowledge, that the world may trust the sentence of a poet.

" I write to you, Sir, on this theame, because
Your soule is cleare, and you observe the lawes
Of poesie so justly, that I chuse
Yours onely the example to my muse.
And till my browner haire be mixt with grey,
Without a blush, Ile tread the sportive way
My muse directs; a poet youth may be,
But age doth dote without philosophie."

The 1st part closes at pp. 65—67, with a poem so simple, so chaste, so elegant, harmonious, and happy, as to exceed my powers of praise.

" *The Description of Castara.*

" Like the violet, which alone
Prospers in some happy shade,
My Castara lives unknowne,
To no looser eye betray'd,
For shee's to herselfe untrue,
Who delights i' th' publicke view.

Such her beauty, as no arts
Have enricht with borrowed grace,
Her high birth no pride imparts,
For she blushes in her place.
Folly boasts a glorious blood,
She is noblest, being good.

Cautious, she knew never yet,
What a wanton courtship meant:
Not speaks loud to boast her wit,
In her silence eloquent.
Of herselfe survey she takes,
But 'tweene men no difference makes.

She obeyes with speedy will
Her grave parents' wise commands.
And so innocent, that ill,
She nor acts, nor understands.
Women's feet runne still astray,
If once to ill they know the way.

She sailes by that rocke, the court,
Where oft honour splits her mast:
And retir'dnesse thinks the port,
Where her fame may anchor cast.
Vertue safely cannot sit,
Where vice is enthron'd for wit.

She holds that daye's pleasure best,
Where sinne waits not on delight;
Without Maske, or ball, or feast,
Sweetly spends a Winter's night.
O're that darknesse, whence is thrust,
Prayer and sleepe often governs lust.

She her throne makes reason climbe,
While wild passions captive lie;
And each article of time,
Her pure thoughts to heaven flie:
All her vows religious be,
And her love she vowes to me."

Art. DCCLXIV.

N°. LXV. *Difference between thought and Action. Elevated sentiments not to be taxed with want of sincerity, nor as useless, because not always followed by practice.*

"Mens cujusque is est quisque." Cic."

Every one is aware of the difference between thought and action. To conceive a plan, and to execute it, requires talents so dissimilar, that they but rarely concentre in the same person.

He whose mind is exercised in discriminating the varieties of the human character, will every day meet with men, who, without the power of reasoning, are capable of fixing upon a practical result not inconcordant at least with worldly wisdom. Many may call this an intuitive sagacity; and it sometimes deserves the name. But its appearance of force often, I suspect, proceeds from the weight of its materiality; from its being addressed to the senses, rather than to the intellect.

Men of this cast judge of every thing only by its execution. "Act," they cry, "and do not talk; words are only wind!" Ideas they consider as

vapoury as the fantastic shapes of the clouds, and as liable to pass away: they judge of the visions of theory as of the imaginations of the insane. Nay, they deem that there is a kind of falsehood and deceit in the expression of sentiments and convictions, which are not instantly followed up by practice.

For the ordinary purposes of life, the gracious decrees of Providence have ordered that this low sort of understanding should be sufficient. As long as it keeps within its province, and does not aspire to insult or decry those of higher endowments, it may be pitied, and now and then even approved. But when it ventures to despise "the shadowy tribes of mind;" and to refuse all credit to the eloquence of the head, or the sensibilities of the heart, because action cannot always keep pace with the rapid travels of the soul, it must not complain if it draw down the indignation due to its groveling nature.

It is almost inconceivable how little understanding is necessary to enable a man to preserve the appearance of a coarse rectitude of conduct through life. If he never venture to reason; if he keep a solemn reserve; and occasionally pronounce a decision on the pending topic in an oracular tone, and act with prudential caution, he will have the credit of possessing good sound common sense: while the most brilliant talents will be thought frothy and superficial, if they are sometimes too refined for the routine of vulgar business, and sometimes evaporate in speculation.

These narrow and illiberal censurers indeed go

much further; they even suspect and accuse of want of integrity, those whose conceptions and expressions are sometimes too abundant, or too visionary for action. But what can be more ignorant, or more unjust than this stigma?

The contempt of stupidity is, it must be confessed, very provoking. Why should the dull suppose that nothing is good but according to their own model? Why should they endeavour to lower us down to mere materialism?

It is among the evils which mix themselves in this world with all good, that the very superiority to which acute and highly-cultivated minds are raised, exposes them to many keen disgusts and mortifications, to which those of a coarser cast are insensible. The former are of a temperament too nice for the common intercourse of society. The rudeness and insults of the obtuse-headed and the hard-hearted, make too deep an impression on them. The finer mechanism of their internal emotions is deranged by rough and brutal behaviour. Otherwise, such pitiful and ill-founded animadversions would not for a moment give pain to a well-regulated intellect.

It is a mark of the divine part of our nature, to be constantly aspiring at some excellence beyond our practical reach; and to indulge a thousand virtuous visions, which, if they have vanished with the clouds, have yet not flitted accross our fancies in vain!

Whoever is in the habitual practice of accusing the eloquent and richly-gifted, of an hypocritical want

of integrity, because they cannot always act up to their own theories and expressions, ought to be despised for his ignorance, and branded for his defect of charity.

That beings of this low and base conformation should hate poetry, and all the charms of fiction, can excite no wonder: indeed the contrary would be grossly inconsistent. We hear them treat this divine art as "empty sound, meaning nothing;" and only fit to be the play-thing of children, and love-sick girls! Poor wretches, that glory in the filth and darkness of their own miry cells!

If, indeed, it can be proved, that there is no sincerity in him who deals in high-wrought sentiments; if he utter what he does not feel, and with an intention to deceive, the case is of a widely-different stamp. And even should there be no intention to deceive, they will betray to well-qualified judges their want of nature. There is in what flows from the heart, a sort of indescribable attraction, which produces instantaneous sympathy in the intelligent.

It may, however, be admitted, that there is a distinction of no small importance between those to whom lofty conceptions are within the capacity, and only occasional; and those to whom they are habitual. This may arise from temper, accidental circumstances, and other complex causes. It will not affect the sincerity of the utterers; but the degree of reliance on the probability of more frequent approach to concurrence of action.

If these opinions are calculated to offend many,

let them recollect, that they have drawn the stigma on themselves by the narrowness and illiberality of their own judgments.

Feb. 20, 1809.

Art. DCCLXV.

N°. LXVI. *On the Inadequacy of Cotemporary Envy and prejudice to the final Suppression or Injury of a well founded Fame.*

"Whom not th' extended Albion could contain,
From old Belerium to the Northern main,
The grave unites; together now they rest."

If a literary man be not content with his reputation, till he has secured the applause of all the best judges among his cotemporaries, he must descend to his grave in a state of mortification and depression. Envy and prejudice, springing from rivalry, will too often insinuate themselves into the best minds, and taint the most correct or candid judgments. Departed Geniuses, who now stand on the same shelf in equal reputation, treated each other, while living, with mutual contempt or hatred. This is well known to have been the case with the two leaders of modern romance in this country, Fielding and Richardson.

Time settles all these differences; and these little passions are forgot in the tomb. Bishop Burnet spoke of the inimitable author of Henry and Emma, as "*one Prior!*" and Swift treated the Bishop with the most scornful raillery; yet Burnet,

and Prior, and Swift, all at length hold their proper place in the temple of Fame, unaffected by each other's injustice. The Bishop also, I think, spoke of Dryden as a compound of vice and impurity. Yet, has this calumny tended to sink the poet's reputation an atom? I do not defend such illiberal conduct; nor do I deny that it may lower a doubtful fame beyond recovery. But real merits will penetrate the temporary veil, as the sun bursts through clouds. What now avail all the degrading expressions which passed between Warburton and Lowth? Both now shine with undiminished lustre in their respective ranks of literature. How utterly have passed away the consequences of the secret enmity between Pope and Addison! The slighting opinion expressed by Gray, of Akenside's "*Pleasures of Imagination*," is now of as little import to its credit, as the gentle movement of the passing breeze to the oak, whose branches scarcely bend to its current.

Johnson's hostility to Gray, could never diminish his popularity while living; nor cloud the glory of his Muse when dead. Darwin's affected contempt of Cowper, only recoiled upon himself. How it takes from the nobleness of a great mind, to be thus stained by these petty and disgraceful passions! What strange narrowness, to fear that there may not be space enough for all! And that excellence must be confined to one model! The truth is, that every varied merit in some degree increases the public relish for its opposite, by the contrast which it affords. So that even in a selfish view, envy and jealousy have no just foundation.

Let no writer then despair, because there are many of deserved credit, whose approbation he cannot secure; nay, whose sneers and censures he cannot overcome. Their depreciation cannot finally injure him, if his claims stand upon a solid basis, and their applause, could he have it, would be vainly bestowed, if not really his due.

Temporary fame is, no doubt, often the result of accident, or whim, or intrigue. But it is as short-lived, as it is unsound. It blows the possessor up into the air, only to have the mortification of the greater fall. When it is the consequence of his own manœuvres, he is entitled to no pity; if it originate from extrinsic circumstances, his humiliation, severe as it must be, is not without a claim to sympathy.

There are men who push themselves into notice by the extent of their personal acquaintance; by little acts of literary officiousness; and by a familiarity with all the common modes, and all the artifices by which books may be circulated. But the effect ceases with the cause; and they are remembered only as long as these exertions continue to operate. Johnson, if I recollect, makes an observation of this kind with regard to the fame of David Mallet.

If there be short roads to the temple of Fame, the temple to which they lead is not the true one. The real road is long and laborious; and he who surmounts it, must incur many weary days, and many self-denials.

When a reputation is thus acquired, all the private motives which have obstructed its progress for

a season will die away, and be no more felt. Malice and rivalry "war not with the dead."

But whatever be the effect of them on the object to whom they are directed, let no one think the indulgence of these passions innocent. They are unamiable, illiberal, and unworthy of a great or a good mind. The charge against Addison, of hidden ill-will to Pope, is, if true (and be it remembered, that the proofs of it are not decisive *), a sad stain on his character. The operation of these feelings on the judgment, is indeed often so insensible, as to elude the detection of him whom they influence. But impartial posterity will perceive it, and pronounce with truth upon his prejudices. His unjust attempts at depreciation, will fall upon his own head, and cause regret at the contemplation of the mingled infirmities of him whom they wish only to admire.

How little effectual have been the rude and boisterous attempts of Ritson, to sink the fame of the Historian of English Poetry! But they have deeply sullied his own credit; and the estimation, not only of his moral, but his intellectual qualities. Yet even from him, these sad instances of his malignant temper, and perverted judgment, cannot withdraw the acknowledgment of the merits which he really possessed. To his persevering industry, and the vast stores of minute and accurate discovery which flowed from it, the public are willing to concede, at least, its due share of praise!

In every department of exertion, it is melancholy,

* See Dr. Warton's Pope, IV. 30. 34.

and even disgusting, to observe how few can bear "a brother near the throne."

If there be any, who can feel envy or jealousy of a being so obscure as I am, let them lay it aside. It will be of no use to the purposes they desire. If I have no well-grounded pretensions to notice, I shall soon be forgotten without the aid of their efforts: If the perseverance from boyhood to the age of forty-six in literary pursuits, have given me any claims, however slight, to public favour, that claim cannot be taken away, or even shaken by them! But the memory of their offence will long haunt their own consciences, after it has ceased to reach me!

Feb. 20, 1809.

Art. DCCLXVI.

N°. LXVII. *Praises of Old English Poets, from W. Browne's Britannia's Pastorals.*

"With rough majestic force they mov'd the heart,
And strength and nature made amends for art."

Rowe.

William Browne, in his Britannia's Pastorals, of which the First Book was published in 1613, in folio, and the Second Book in 1616; and both parts were reprinted in 2 vols. sm. 8vo. 1623,*

* The first book is dedicated to Edward Lord Zouch; and has commendatory verses by J. Selden, both Latin and English; Michael Drayton; Edward Heyward, of the Inner Temple; Christopher

gives the following praises of some of our old English Poets, in *Book* 2, *Song* 2.

"SIDNEY began, and (if a wit so mean
May taste with him the dews of Hippocrene),
I sung the *Pastoral* next, his Muse my mover:
And on the plains full many a pensive lover
Shall sing us to their loves, and praising be
My humble lines the more for praising thee.
Thus shall we live with them by rocks, by springs,
As well as Homer by the death of kings.
Then in a strain beyond an oaten quill,
The learned Shepherd * of fair *Hitching* hill,
Sung the heroic deeds of Greece and Troy
In lines so worthy life, that I employ
My reed in vain to overtake his fame:
All praiseful tongues do wait upon that name.
Our second Ovid, the most pleasing muse
That heaven did e'er in mortals brain infuse,
All-loved DRAYTON, in soul-rapping strains,
A genuine note of all the nymphish trains
Began to tune; on it all ears were hung,
As sometime Dido's on Æneas' tongue.

Brooke; Fr. Dynne, of the Inner Temple; and Thomas Gardiner, of the same.

The second book is dedicated to William Earl of Pembroke, and has commendatory verses by John Glanville; Tho. Wenman, of the Inner Temple; W. Herbert; John Davies, of Hereford; Charles Croke (in Latin); Unton Croke, of the Inner Temple; Anth. Vincent; John Morgan; Tho. Heygate; and Augustus Cæsar; all three of the Inner Temple; G. Wither; W. B.; and Ben Jonson.

A new edition of Browne's Poems was published in 1772, by T. Davies, in 3 small vols. to which were added some short notes, by the Rev. W. Thompson, of Queen's Coll. Oxford. *They have been since incorporated into Chalmers's Poets.*

* Chapman.

JONSON, whose full of merit to rehearse,
Too copious is to be confin'd in verse;
Yet therein only fittest to be known,
Could any write a line which he might own.
One so judicious; so well knowing, and
A man whose least worth is to understand;
One so exact in all he doth prefer
To able censure; for the theatre.
Not Seneca transcends his worth of praise;
Who writes him well shall well deserve the bays.
Well-languag'd DANIEL; BROOKE,* whose polish'd lines
Are fittest to accomplish high designs;
Whose pen, it seems, still young Apollo guides;
Worthy the forked hill, for ever glides
Streams from thy brain, so fair, that time shall see
Thee honour'd by thy verse, and it by thee.
And when thy temple's well-deserving bays,
Might imp a pride in thee to reach thy praise,
As in a chrystal glass, fill'd to the ring
With the clear water of as clear a spring,
A steady hand may very safely drop
Some quantity of gold, yet o'er the top
Not force the liquor run; although before,
The glass of water could contain no more:

* CHRISTOPHER BROOKE was a Yorkshireman, who, after having left the University (whether Oxford or Cambridge, is not known), settled in Lincoln's Inn to study the law, where he became acquainted with the eminent wits of his day; especially after he had published *An Elegy to the Memory of Henry Prince of Wales, Lond.* 1613, *4to.* In the year following he became a Bencher, and Summer Reader of his House; and wrote another book, entitled, *Eclogues, dedicated to his much-loved friend, Mr. Will. Browne, of the Inner Temple, Lond.* 1614, *8vo.* He had a brother, Sam. Brooke, D. D. Archdeacon of Coventry, and Master of Trinity College, a learned divine, who died Sept. 16th, 1631. *Wood's Ath.* F. I. 220.

Yet so, all worthy BROOKE, tho' all men sound
With plummets of just praise thy skill profound;
Thou in thy verse those attributes canst take,
And not apparent ostentation make,
That any second can thy virtues raise,
Striving as much to hide, as merit praise.
DAVIS and WITHER, by whose Muse's power
A natural day to me seems but an hour;
And could I ever hear their learned lays,
Ages would turn to artificial days:
These sweetly chanted to the Queen of waves,
She prais'd; and what she prais'd, no tongue depraves.
Then base contempt, unworthy our report,
Fly from the Muses, and their fair resort,
And exercise thy spleen on men like thee;
Such are more fit to be contemn'd than we.
'Tis not the rancour of a cank'red heart,
That can debase the excellence of art;
Nor great in titles make our worth obey,
Since we have lines far more esteem'd than they.
For there is hidden in a POET'S name,
A spell, that can command the wings of Fame,
And maugre all Oblivion's hated birth,
Begin their immortality on earth;
When he, that 'gainst a Muse with hate combines,
May raise his tomb in vain to reach our lines."

The following is his praise of SPENCER. Having spoken of the bards of Italy and France in his first Song of this book, he goes on,

"But let us leave, fair Muse, the banks of Po;
Thetis forsook his brave stream long ago;

And we must after. See in haste she sweeps
Along the Celtic shores; the Armoric deeps
She now is entering: bear up then ahead,
And by that time she hath discovered
Our Alabaster rocks, we may descry,
And ken with her the coasts of Brittanny.
There will she anchor cast, to hear the songs
Of English shepherds, whose all-tuneful tongues
So pleas'd the Naiades, they did report
Their songs' perfection in great Nereus' court:
Which Thetis hearing, did appoint a day
When she would meet them in the British sea;
And thither for each swain a dolphin bring,
To ride with her, while she would hear him sing.
The time prefix'd was come; and now the star
Of blissful light appear'd, when she her car
Stay'd in the narrow seas. At Thames' fair port
The nymphs and shepherds of the Isle resort;
And thence did put to sea with mirthful rounds,
Whereat the billows dance above their bounds;
And bearded goats, that on the clouded head
Of any sea-surveying mountain fed,
Leaving to crop the ivy, list'ning stood
At those sweet airs, which did entrance the flood.
In jocund sort the Goddess thus they met;
And after reverence done, all being set
Upon their finny coursers, round her throne,
And she prepar'd to cut the wat'ry zone
Ingirting Albion, all their pipes were still,
And Colin Clout began to tune his quill
With such deep art, that every one was given
To think Apollo, newly slid from heaven
Had ta'en a human shape to win his love,
Or with the western swains for glory strove.

He sung the heroic knights of fairy land,
In lines so elegant, of such command,
That had the Thracian * play'd but half so well,
He had not left Euridice in Hell.
But, ere he ended his melodious song,
An host of angels flew the clouds among,
And rapt this swain from his attentive mates,
To make him one of their associates
In Heaven's fair quire: where now he sings the praise
Of him that is the *first and last of days.*
Divinest SPENCER, heaven-bred, happy Muse!
Would any power into thy brain infuse
Thy worth, or all that poets had before,
I could not praise till thou desir'st no more.
A damp of wonder and amazement struck
Thetis' attendants; many a heavy look
Follow'd sweet SPENCER, till the thickening air,
Sight's farther passage stop'd. A passionate tear
Fell from each nymph; no shepherd's cheek was dry;
A doleful dirge, and mournful elegy
Flew to the shore. When mighty Nereus' queen,
In memory of what was heard and seen,
Employ'd a factor, fitted well with store
Of richest gems, refined Indian ore,
To raise, in honour of his worthy name,
A piramis, whose head, like winged Fame,
Should pierce the clouds; yea, seem the stars to kiss,
And Mausolus' great tomb might shroud in his.
Her will had been performance, had not Fate,

* Orpheus.

That never knew how to commiserate,
Suborn'd curs'd Avarice to lie in wait
For that rich prey (gold is a taking bait);
Who closely lurking, like a subtle snake,
Under the covert of a thorny brake,
Seiz'd on the Factor by fair Thetis sent,
And robb'd our Colin of his monument."

Having gone thus far, it would be unfair to omit the praise of Browne himself, by one or two of his cotemporaries.

To his Friend, the Author of the Pastorals. By Michael Drayton.

Drive forth thy flock, young pastor, to that plain,
Where our old shepherds wont their flocks to feed;
To those clear walks, where many a skilful swain
To'ards the calm evening tun'd his pleasant reed.
Those, to the Muses once so sacred, downs,
As no rude foot might there presume to stand;
Now made the way of the unworthiest clowns,
Digg'd and plough'd up with each unhallow'd hand;
If possible thou canst redeem those places,
Where by the brim of many a silver spring,
The learned Maidens and delightful Graces,
Often have sat to hear our shepherd's sing;
Whereon those pines, the neighbouring groves among,
Now utterly neglected in these days,
Our garlands, pipes, and cornamutes, were hung
The monuments of our deserved praise.
So may thy sheep like, so thy lambs increase,
And from the wolf feed ever safe and free!
So may'st thou thrive amongst the learned prease,
As thou, young shepherd, art belov'd of me!

To the same.

So much a stranger, my severer Muse
  Is not to love-strains, or a shepherd's reed,
But that she knows some rites of Phœbus' dues,
  Of Pan, of Pallas, and her sister's meed.
Read, and commend she durst these tun'd Essays
  Of *him that loves her:* she hath ever found
Her studies as one circle. Next, she prays
  His readers be with rose and myrtle crown'd!
No willow touch them! As his bays are free,
  From wrong of bolts, so may their chaplets be!*

* Headley has given a well discriminated, but, perhaps, too severe character of Browne.

Brown was borne at Tavistock, in Devonshire, in 1590; and is supposed to have died in 1645. See *Wood's Ath.* I. 491, &c.

Some original poems, by this author, have been printed at the *private press at Lee Priory*, in the present year, 1815. They are copied from a MS. in the British Museum.

END OF VOL. VIII.

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